Oil companies slash gasoline prices anew

STORY ON PAGE A2

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MONDAY, JANUARY 7, 2002 ★ 50 PAGES 5 SECTIONS VOL.17 NO. 30 ₱15

Late show with Erap

WALANG... TULUGAN!
PEKSMAN!

BY VOLT CONTRERAS

GUESS who rose to Kuya Germs' challenge, "*Walang tulugan!*"?

Jailed ex-President Joseph Estrada and son Jinggoy gave a phone interview on the weekly

LATE/ A4

WHAT'S INSIDE

- **New witness in Nida killing** METRO / A19
- **Why peace talks collapsed** NEWS / A5
- **Drilon: Minority 'dreaming'** NEWS / A3
- **Price ceilings on AUVs eyed** BUSINESS/ B2

YOU: Gloria 'supporters' behind slay

BY CARLITO PABLO AND MARTIN P. MARFIL

SUPT. Rafael Cardeño, chair of the Young Officers Union, yesterday broke his silence on the killing of ex-Army Lt. Baron Cervantes, saying "patricians of the Macapagal administration"—not him and his group—were behind the murder.

SAYCON: "We recognize Cervantes' death as a patriot." JESS YUSON

"It's 'God Save the Queen' all over again. It's the same script and high-stakes game which made then President Corazon Aquino fearful of and dependent on certain people amid the echoes of destabilization," Cardeño said in a phone interview.

Asked about those orchestrating the plot, Cardeño said: "It's somebody beside her (President Macapagal-Arroyo) who has been wanting to be important."

Last week, Ms Macapagal spoke bitterly about the difficulties faced by "a female President," who becomes vulnerable to power brokers "biased against women."

Ms Macapagal's lament came amid a "rift" between her and former President Fidel V. Ramos which allegedly stemmed from reports that the latter was planning to run for president in 2004.

A group identified with Ramos, the People's Consultative Assembly, has accused the President and the First Gentleman of corrupt practices.

Ramos on Saturday denied a hand in the alleged destabilization plot, saying he did not want to destroy his legacy.

"Why should I, of all people, be involved in a coup that could damage or destroy my own legacy to the people as president of the Philippines?" he said.

"Why should I want to destroy the fragile stability . . . that I worked so hard (to preserve) as a public servant for 51 years?" Ramos remarked as he expressed his support for Ms Macapagal.

In a speech during a dinner for the diplomatic corps in Malacañang, Ms Macapagal declared that her administration had achieved political stability.

She said her administration, which marks its first year this month, was battling only "residual problems in law and order."

"We have firmly stabilized the domestic political situation while continuing to mop up residual problems in law and order," the President said.

YOU/ A16

Baron praised for patriotism in burial rites

BY TJ BURGONIO AND CHRISTIAN V. ESGUERRA

THE HEAD of the Council on Philippine Affairs (Copa) took the Young Officers' Union (YOU) to task for the "unjustifiable killing" of Alexander Baron Cervantes even as YOU pinned the blame on Cervantes' death on "patricians of the Macapagal administration."

"If Bong (Cervantes) had committed some mistakes in their organization, is it justifiable that they snuff out his life?" Copa secretary general Pastor "Boy" Saycon told reporters on Saturday night.

"If they're saying he's an impostor, they should have unmasked him early on. But it's not justifiable to have him killed," Saycon said.

Cervantes was buried at the Manila Memorial Park yesterday morning. His coffin was carried by Saycon, National Security Adviser Roilo Golez, Dante Jimenez of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption, lawyer Leonard de Vera, and two others toward the burial site.

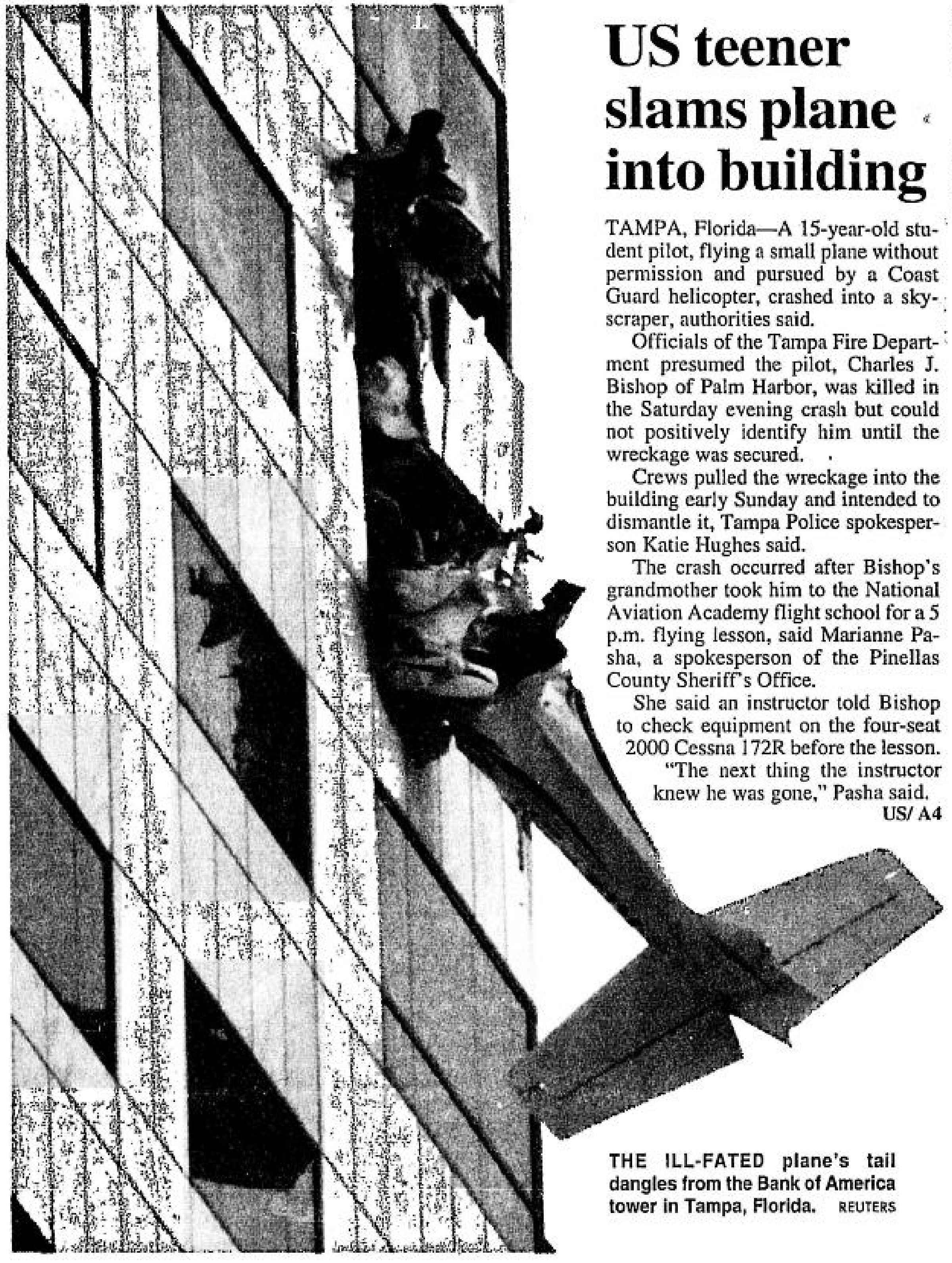
Saycon, who turned up at the necrological services for Cervantes at the Holy Trinity Memorial Chapels in Parañaque City on Saturday night, was referring to Cervantes' claim that he was the YOU's spokesperson and to his exposé of a coup plot involving some YOU members.

YOU officials have disowned Cervantes following his disclosure on radio of the clandestine meeting between YOU and Rebolusyonaryong Alyansang Makabansa members in Puerto Azul in Cavite to hatch a coup plot against the administration last Christmas.

Cervantes' disclosure of the plot is one of the angles being pursued by police investigators.

Cervantes was gunned down in front of the 7-Eleven convenience store on Zapote Road in Las Piñas City on Dec. 31.

BARON/ A16



THE ILL-FATED plane's tail dangles from the Bank of America tower in Tampa, Florida. REUTERS

US teener slams plane into building

TAMPA, Florida—A 15-year-old student pilot, flying a small plane without permission and pursued by a Coast Guard helicopter, crashed into a skyscraper, authorities said.

Officials of the Tampa Fire Department presumed the pilot, Charles J. Bishop of Palm Harbor, was killed in the Saturday evening crash but could not positively identify him until the wreckage was secured.

Crews pulled the wreckage into the building early Sunday and intended to dismantle it, Tampa Police spokesperson Katie Hughes said.

The crash occurred after Bishop's grandmother took him to the National Aviation Academy flight school for a 5 p.m. flying lesson, said Marianne Pasha, a spokesperson of the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office.

She said an instructor told Bishop to check equipment on the four-seat 2000 Cessna 172R before the lesson.

"The next thing the instructor knew he was gone," Pasha said.

US/ A4

Heart baby, mom finally get US visas

BY DONNA S. CUETO

THE SAGA of 2-year-old "heart baby" Jerden Sampang took a heartwarming turn over the weekend, after a senior US Embassy official intervened and the New York hospital rescheduled her free special heart surgery from Jan. 8 to Jan. 22.

The chief of the non-immigrant visa section of the US Embassy in Manila, Stuart Patt, called up Eden Sampang, Jerden's mother, in Olongapo City on Saturday night,

HEART/ A15

RP's new heroes subjected to abuse

BY FERNANDO DEL MUNDO

(This commentary was written by a former Manila bureau chief of United Press International. He now works in Europe—Ed)

COMMENTARY

THE PHILIPPINES hails overseas Filipino workers as the new heroes of this cash-strapped country because they bring in precious dollars but subjects them to all sorts of indignities.

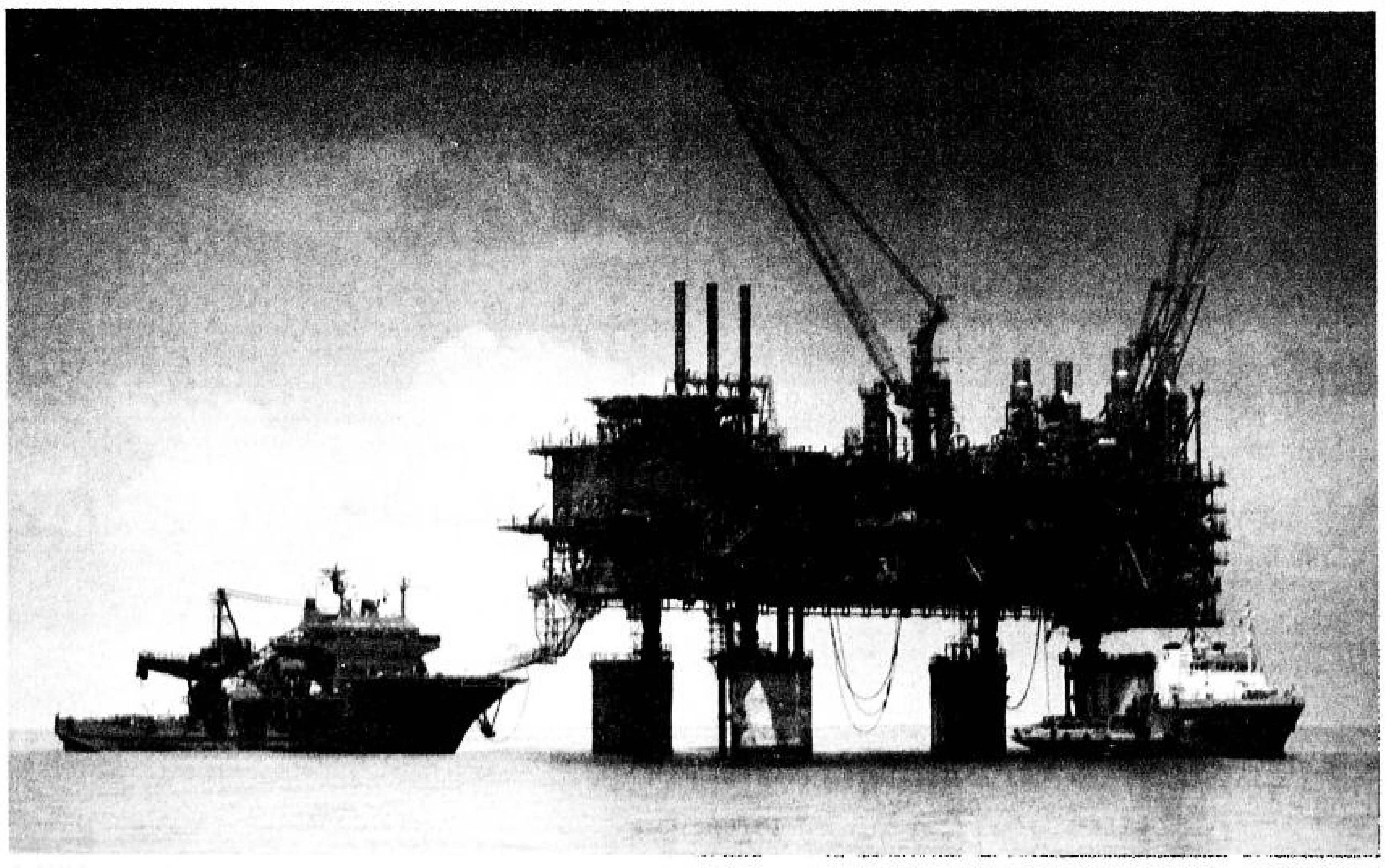
Authorities in most Philippine consulates routinely give them short shrift when they ask for help. When they do respond, it's after they have overcome their officiousness and arrogance and know they will gain from it.

But the meanest of them can be found at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

There, security guards act like Nazi storm troopers, twirling clubs and screaming insults at the returning heroes and their relatives who have either come to meet them or to see them off.

The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), the government office that is sup-

RP's/ A15



CALEDONIAN Offshore Ltd. claims it can help job seekers get started on 26 major oil exploration projects worldwide, including the Malampaya oil rig shown in this file photo in northwestern Palawan. EDWIN BACASMAS

Mail fraud artists back in business

BY JERRY ESPLANADA

(First of three parts)

RECRUITMENT VULTURES
An I TEAM Report

EARN as much as $430 a day on a foreign offshore oil rig! That's about P22,000 every day, and tax-free.

Arnel Reyes, of Jerome, Agdao District in Davao City, got one of the biggest surprises of his life early last November when he received what he called a "once-in-a-lifetime job offer" in the mail from a Canadian company called Caledonian Offshore Ltd.

Similar letters reached Arnel Bautista, of San Mateo, Rizal; Francisco Bustamante, of Iloilo City; and Anthony Fred Juco, of Talisay, Cebu, among others.

The job offer was made by one Philip M. Croshaw, president of Caledonian Offshore.

Croshaw claimed at least 41 positions were available on offshore platforms in the North Sea in Europe and other foreign oil fields, including openings for drillers, geologists, control room operators, barge captains, engineers, electricians, divers, welders, painters, room stewards, and medical team and environmental crew members.

In his letter, he said daily earnings for a roustabout, or helper, were "$310-345 a day because you are required to work 12 hours every day. This means that you will have an annual salary of $42,000-$46,000."

Caledonian Offshore did not name its partner companies but assured job applicants that petroleum contractors "supply working clothes for all employees. Board, food, laundry, etc. are all free on the rig. Food is of international luxury standard. There is an abundance of meat dishes. There are also free film shows and videos. The only things you have to buy on the rigs are toothpaste and cigarettes."

But here's the catch: Caledonian requires job applicants to pay $438

MAIL/ A16

Second FRONT PAGE

MAGANDANG BALITA SA BAGONG TAON!

Oil firms cut gas prices anew

By Ronnel W. Domingo

PRICES of petroleum products have gone down again as oil companies slashed gasoline prices by 35 centavos per liter and of diesel and kerosene by 30 centavos, starting at midnight last night.

Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. was the first to announce the rollback. It cited the movements in Dubai crude prices and the peso-dollar exchange rate between November and December for the reductions.

Petron Corp., Caltex Phil., TotalFinaElf Phil., Flying V, Eastern Petroleum Corp. and Unioil Petroleum Phil. also announced that they would be implementing the same price cuts at different times between midnight and noon today.

New industry player Seaoil Petroleum Corp., however, said it had already reduced pump prices by the same amount since 2 p.m. yesterday.

The price reductions were the first to be carried out this year and the seventh since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the United States.

The last rollback on Dec. 18 brought down the prices of oil products by 30 centavos per liter, including a P1-per-kg cut in the price of liquefied petroleum gas.

Shell vice president Reynaldo Gamboa, in a statement, noted that the series of price cuts brought the total reduction of gasoline prices to P2.19 per liter and that of diesel to P1.71 per liter.

World crude prices averaged $17.90 per barrel in December, up by 23 cents from November's $17.67.

The peso, meantime, gained 24 centavos last month, standing at P51.75 to the dollar against P51.99 in November.

Gamboa said, however, that crude prices have started to go up as the world's leading oil producers a production cutback of 2 million barrels a day.

"The first trading days of the year have shown crude oil prices increasing (by $.1.25 per barrel) from the December average of $17.90 to $19.15," Gamboa said. "We will be watching this closely."

But the Shell official ruled out any price increases in the next few weeks.

"We are quite confident that local prices allow some level of comfort at least for the whole month of January," he said.

Energy Secretary Vicente Perez Jr. welcomed the latest price reduction while noting the upward trend in crude prices.

"This is a good measure to start the new year," Perez said.

He said energy department computations showed that a private motorist could save from P300 to P400 a month after the price cuts.

A jeepney driver would be able to save a much as P3,000 a month, Perez said.

US military advisers going to battlefront

By Carlito Pablo

AMERICAN military consultants will be allowed to take a "closer look" at the battlefront and advise Filipino ground commanders on how to engage the Abu Sayyaf, according to presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao.

Tiglao said the more active role to be played by American military "consultants" in the war against the Abu Sayyaf was part of the "heightened cooperation" agreed upon by the Philippines and the United States in the fight against terrorism.

The US had previously confined its assistance to the training of Filipino troops and the supply of advanced military equipment to the Philippines.

President Macapagal-Arroyo is expected to announce this week the final form the joint battle plan presented to her by the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the US Pacific Command would take.

The battle plan involves the sending in of more US military consultants who will play a bigger role and offer additional expertise, including the use of psychological warfare, in the effort to finally neutralize the hostage-taking Abu Sayyaf.

"They (US consultants) could be brought in to the battalion level just for a closer look," Tiglao told Palace reporters. "It would be hard for these consultants to function if they confined themselves to Manila, Zamboanga City or Basilan."

The battalion level means the frontlines in military jargon.

Tiglao said, however, the US consultants would not be allowed to issue orders to Filipino ground units during actual operations, or even "order someone to make coffee for them."

"They would just advise or be consulted," Tiglao said, when asked what role they would play when actual firefights erupt in the field between government forces and the Abu Sayyaf.

Tiglao had previously stressed the experts would not go the way of American military advisers in Vietnam where US forces eventually went into combat.

"By definition, they are consultants," Tiglao said.

He said the Americans would be allowed to keep their sidearms, however.

"Sidearms are part of their uniform. It's standard anywhere in the world," Tiglao said.

At the same time, Tiglao denied reports that US Special Forces were setting up their own jungle camp in Basilan.

"There are plans for heightened cooperation but never can there be a base (in this country) for any foreign power," Tiglao said.

Tiglao said the American consultants would be under the "strict command and supervision of Filipino commanders."

Palace 'censor' disturbs Cabinet

By Carlito Pablo

SOME Cabinet members are questioning the practicality of having a Malacañang "communications clearinghouse" to screen all press releases and even media advertisements put out by the government.

Presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao admitted as much as he noted that President Macapagal-Arroyo would "probably" be meeting with her "media advisers" to discuss the issue.

"Some Cabinet members have questions on how to operationalize it," Tiglao said.

Under Memorandum Order No. 49 issued by the President on Dec. 13, press releases, statements and advertisements—from Cabinet-rank officials down to government-owned and -controlled corporations—will have to be coordinated and cleared with Press Undersecretary Manuel Sanchez.

The order has been criticized by lawmakers and non-government organizations as constituting a form of censorship, or worse, a throwback to the hated martial law of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

Palace officials earlier explained that the order would make for a more efficient communication of the Macapagal administration's accomplishments.

Tiglao stressed, however, that the Cabinet members were not complaining against MO 49.

Sanchez recently chided Solicitor General Simeon Marcelo who raised questions on the Kirin-San Miguel Corp. deal which the Palace has welcomed as a good investment.

"A few in the Cabinet want detailed guidelines on how to implement it," Tiglao said but did not identify the officials.

Tiglao declined to say what he personally feels about MO 49 "since I speak for the President."

"It was the decision of the President and she issued the memorandum order," he said.

He said the President "felt the need for coordination" in the government's communications setup.

"It's more coordination. There is no gag order," Tiglao said.

Asked whether the order would be nullified or amended, Tiglao said: "Only the President can modify it."

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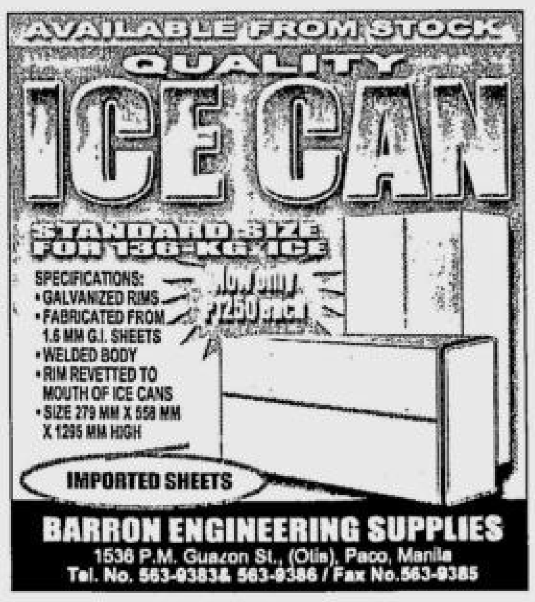
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Drilon says minority 'dreaming'

By Rocky Nazareno

SENATE President Frank Drilon yesterday said the minority was "dreaming" as he dismissed reports that a change in the Senate leadership was in the offing.

"There will be no defection of majority senators, not even one, to the minority," he said.

Drilon said the 13-member majority would remain "intact and supportive of (my) leadership" when the chamber reopens on Jan. 14.

"They're (the minority bloc) only dreaming. No power shift will take place when Congress resumes session," Drilon said.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. earlier said a leadership change was looming in the Senate as at least two "disenchanted administration senators" were ready to bolt the majority.

Drilon brushed off Pimentel's revelations as merely "the most publicized coup plot (in the Senate) in the past six months."

He said the latest ouster plot against him was "plain and simple politicking," and would not disrupt the Senate leadership's resolve to push for the passage of much-needed legislation aimed at boosting the economy.

"(The minority) has been talking about a coup in the Senate for the past six months and yet not a single senator from the majority has joined them," he said.

"There is absolutely no (additional) vote for the minority... not even one from the majority will join them," Drilon said.

In Cebu City, Sen. John Osmeña yesterday said Drilon would keep his post as he has succeeded in appeasing the members of the majority bloc threatening to bolt the ruling coalition.

"I am happy for him. I admire his patience. He was able to soothe their feelings," Osmeña, who chairs the Senate finance committee, said in Cebuano. He did not elaborate.

Pimentel refused to name the disgruntled administration senators.

But reports said Senate President Pro Tempore Manuel Villar, Majority Leader Loren Legarda, Senators Noli de Castro, Ralph Recto and Robert Barbers were disenchanted with Drilon's leadership.

But Drilon reportedly succeeded in ironing out the kinks with the "disgruntled" senators before leaving for Hawaii to attend an Asia-Pacific Parliamentarians Union assembly late last week.

Pimentel, who is set to relinquish the leadership of the minority bloc to Sen. Edgardo Angara, would benefit most from a defection since he would most likely be tapped as the new Senate President in a reorganized Senate.

A shift in allegiance by just two administration senators would tilt the balance in the chamber in favor of the opposition which has 11 senators against the majority's 13.

But even if the minority were to get an additional member to create a 12-12 deadlock, Senate rules provide that the status quo in the leadership is upheld.

Osmeña said the plan to unseat Drilon was an "old tune."

He pointed to opposition Sen. Blas Ople as the source of talks that Drilon would lose the Senate leadership.

Osmeña, while stressing that he has no plans of quitting the coalition, expressed his annoyance at the goings-on at the Senate and planned to give up the chairmanship of the finance committee as a result.

"I'm tired of the way the Senate is going. There are too many smarty-pants who think they know (everything)," he said in Cebuano.

There was an earlier attempt to wrest the leadership from Drilon when opposition Sen. Teresa Aquino-Oreta filed a motion to declare all seats in the Senate vacant last October.

Oreta made the call after lashing out at top government officials for being away from the country when violence erupted in Mindanao.

Drilon was in the United States with the party of President Macapagal-Arroyo who was on a working visit there. *With a report from Malou Guanzon-Apalisok, PDI Visayas Bureau*

After South, GMA heads North

By Carlito Pablo

FROM THE SOUTH, President Macapagal-Arroyo heads North today as part of her nationwide roadshow to mark her first year in power.

President Macapagal will hit the road after a day's rest at the Palace following a four-day swing that took her to Masbate, Sorsogon, Albay, Maguindanao and Cotabato City.

Ms Macapagal will spend two days stomping through the new towns of Tinoc and Aguinaldo in Ifugao; Rizal and Tanudan in Kalinga; and Dinapigue, Divilacan and Maconacon in Isabela.

She will also meet officers of the Army's 5th Infantry Division in Gamu, Isabela.

In her speeches in Bicol, President Macapagal said she was undertaking the roadshow because "not all of you will be able to go" to Edsa when she celebrates her first year in office on Jan. 20.

"That's why I personally came here for an advance celebration with you," the President told Bicolanos.

In Cotabato City, Ms Macapagal installed Dr. Parouk Hussin as the new governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Min-danao.

Her Cabinet also held its first meeting for the year 2002 in the same city.

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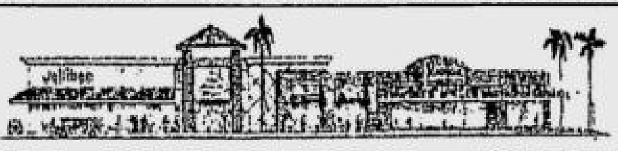

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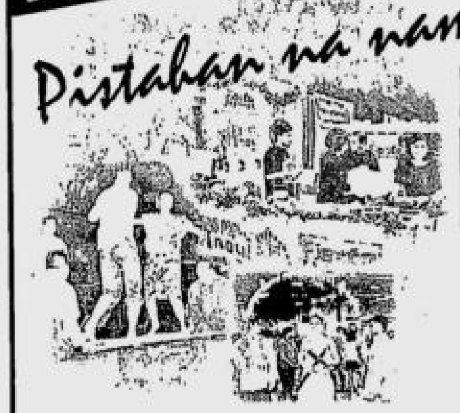

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Late show with Erap, Jinggoy

(From page A1)

late night variety show "Master Showman" at 12:45 a.m. on Sunday.

But it was not another litany of their legal problems or political concerns, but strictly show biz. Father and son stayed up that late to promote Jinggoy's movie, "Walang Iwanan, Peksman."

The movie, set to open Wednesday, was shot well before the Estradas' arrest last April 25 on plunder and graft charges.

The phone-patch interview, aired live on GMA network, took place as program host German "Kuya Germs" Moreno was interviewing teen idol and Jinggoy's co-star, Judy Ann Santos, on the set.

The show first called up Jinggoy at the Estradas' detention suite at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center in Quezon City.

The former mayor of San Juan, Metro Manila, gave the usual spiels to promote his latest project. But the surprise of the night came when Jinggoy handed over the phone to his 64-year-old dad.

"The movie's trailer is good," the elder Estrada said, "*Sana kumita rin gaya ng mga pelikula ko noong araw* (I hope it earns just like my past films)."

Apparently in a light mood, Estrada even complimented Santos' looks, saying that when he finally saw her in person during "Peksman's" "press conference," she struck him as a "natural beauty."

Yes, Jinggoy, detained and all, still managed to call for a "press con" for his movie at the VMMC last Dec. 28.

"Perhaps she (Santos) then realized that I'm more handsome than her leading man," the ousted president said in Filipino, with a chuckle. At this point, he handed the phone back to his son.

The exchange took just about 10 minutes, with Jinggoy ending the call with a greeting to his wife Precy, their three children and other relatives.

Back to the trial

Today, that brief relapse to show biz is over and it's back to grim reality for the Estradas as the Sandiganbayan resumes their trial for plunder.

The 2 p.m. hearing at the Sandiganbayan third division is expected to continue with the testimony of prosecution witness, businessman Willie Ng Ocier.

A vice president of the gaming firm Belle Corp., Ocier is set to testify how Estrada allegedly earned P189.7 million in commissions from the sale of Belle shares to state pension fund agencies, the Social Security System and the Government Service Insurance System.

The transactions were done in October 1999, allegedly after Estrada personally instructed the SSS and GSIS presidents at the time, both of whom were his appointees.

Also yesterday, a prosecutor in the plunder case said the Supreme Court was expected to address this month concerns stemming from the temporary composition of the third division justices, an issue raised last week by Estrada's lawyers seeking the "re-raffle" of the case to another division.

Dennis Villa-Ignacio said word had reached the prosecution team that the SC might "recommend the creation of a special division in the Sandiganbayan that will handle the plunder case."

The SC justices, he said, "are aware of the predicament of the third division."

Estrada's defense panel had argued that the former President would be denied due process if his case continued to be heard by a court where two of three justices were sitting merely as temporary replacements.

They are referring to Justice Nicodemo Ferrer, who had sat in for Ricardo Ilarde who retired last Nov. 27, and Justice Narciso Nario, who had filled up the seat vacated by the division chair Anacleto Badoy.

Badoy has been on forced leave since December due to his pending administrative cases before the Supreme Court.

Both Ferrer and Nario are from the fourth division. Currently serving as acting third division chair is Teresita Leonardo de Castro, the only functioning original member of that division.

Villa-Ignacio said any "special division" to be created for the Estrada case should consist of justices with "three to four more years" to serve before retirement.

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I have prepared a position paper on the issue. You can secure a copy by faxing a request to 687-3863.

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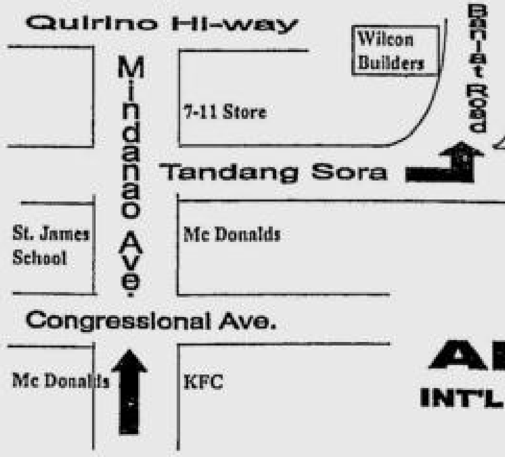

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US teener . . .

(From page A1)

Although terrorism was quickly discounted, the televised image of a plane blasting a hole in the side of a skyscraper was a chilling reminder of the World Trade Center attacks.

The plane's tail dangled near the 28th floor of the 42-story Bank of America building.

Only a few office workers and the staff of a club in the building were present at the time of the crash. None was injured.

Michael Cronin, an attorney for the National Aviation Academy, said Bishop had been taking lessons since March 2001 and had logged about six hours of flight time.

He said the boy often bartered to clean planes in exchange for flight time and became very familiar with operations at the school.

Cronin said students usually did preflight equipment checks on their own, then have an instructor verify their accuracy.

"The bottom line is he essentially stole the aircraft," Cronin said. "We aren't going to speculate what his mental state or motivations were."

Air traffic controllers at the St. Petersburg-Clearwater Airport notified the Coast Guard that the Cessna had taken off without clearance.

A Coast Guard HH60 Jayhawk helicopter on routine patrol intercepted the plane and attempted to give the pilot visual signals to land at a small airport, but the pilot did not respond, Coast Guard Lt. Charlotte Pittman said.

No record

Police said the FBI was interviewing Bishop's family and that there was no record of the ninth grader running into problems with the law in the past.

The boy was not known to officials at East Lake High School in Palm Harbor, a community about 40 km west of Tampa. The freshman kept to himself, neighbors said.

"He rode my bus to school. He sat in the front row. He always had sunglasses on for some reason," said David Ontiveros, a 14-year-old neighbor in the apartment complex where Bishop lived with his mother. "He never talked to anybody."

The 28th floor houses the law firm of Shumaker, Loop and Kendrick. Managing partner Greg Yadley said one attorney and her husband were in the offices at the time of the crash, but were not injured. An hour before, he said, an attorney had been at a desk the plane smashed into.

"It could have been possibly a tragic situation," Yadley said. "We were lucky."

Attorney Rogell Rovell was working on the 41st floor Saturday when the plane crashed.

"I heard a loud bang," said Rovell. "It wasn't particularly loud. It sounded like an electrical transformer blowing."

Bush briefed

In Portland, Oregon, where US President George W. Bush was touring a job center, White House spokesperson Scott McClellan said "there is no indication" of terrorism.

He said Bush was briefed on the incident and that White House officials had been in touch with Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge and the Federal Aviation Administration.

Hijacked passenger planes were used to collapse the World Trade Center towers and attack the Pentagon in the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. A fourth hijacked plane crashed in western Pennsylvania.

Gordon Johndroe, a spokesperson for the Office of Homeland Security, said there was also no sign of terrorist involvement in small plane crashes Saturday in California, Colorado and Puerto Rico.

In northeastern Puerto Rico, a small plane crash left at least five people dead.

A twin-engine plane went down a block away from an airport in Buena Park, California, killing at least one person.

And in Colorado, a single-engine airplane crashed and exploded in foothills northwest of Boulder, killing one person. *AP*

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Why peace talks collapsed

By C. Pablo
and G. Lacuarta

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo wanted a single comprehensive peace agreement with the communist National Democratic Front, but this was rejected by the rebels who wanted an agreement for each of the different contentious issues between the two groups.

Presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao said this was the reason the efforts to revive the peace talks between the government and the NDF, which were suspended in June, collapsed.

"The President wanted a single agreement. It's just being straight to the point," Tiglao said.

During the Estrada administration, the two parties had reached an agreement on the first stage of the talks, which was on human rights and international humanitarian law.

The negotiations were focused on social and economic reforms when they were suspended by Ms Macapagal following the assassination by the New People's Army, the NDF's military arm of two congressmen.

The other issues still to be discussed are political and electoral reforms and the disposition of forces.

Under terms being followed by the negotiating panels, an agreement would have to be inked at each stage.

But Tiglao said a single agreement would be better for both sides because negotiating by stages has become "too contentious."

"It becomes a media event and both sides become defensive and sensitive," Tiglao said.

Yesterday, the government's chief negotiator in the talks said the peace negotiations would resume later this month despite accusations by the rebels the government has been trying to scuttle the process, according to an Agence France Presse report.

Leaders of the NDF have assured the Philippine government they are not backing out of the negotiations, Silvestre Bello told reporters.

"They're still willing to resume talks. We're looking at a resumption within this month," Bello said.

Bello' statement came a day after the communist leadership said the government was "actively engaged in scuttling" the talks by deliberately failing to submit a "note verbale" informing the Norwegian government of the negotiations.

Norway had hosted the peace negotiations until they were suspended.

The talks were set to resume Monday in Oslo, but the Norwegian government has not prepared a venue in the absence of an official note verbale from Manila, the communists said.

But Bello said the Jan. 7 to 11 scheduled talks were "only tentative" and they could still take place later this month pending resolution of certain issues, including "confidence building measures to create a conducive atmosphere" for the negotiations.

Communist party founder Jose Maria Sison, in a statement from the Netherlands Sunday, accused the Philippine government of being "double-faced" regarding the negotiations.

Manila was also allegedly trying to push the rebels "into a position of capitulation through a series of back channel talks" instead of formal negotiations, Sison said.

With an AFP report

Cabinet to review toll hikes

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo wants a review of the Toll Regulatory Board's decision to increase the toll on the North and South Luzon expressways and the elevated Metro skyway, spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao said yesterday.

Tiglao said the President ordered the TRB and the Philippine National Construction Corp. to explain the toll increase before the Cabinet meeting on Wednesday in the wake of widespread complaints from motorists.

"The President would want the Cabinet to discuss and to determine whether those toll increases should be implemented," Tiglao said.

Tiglao said that if the two agencies can justify the toll hike, "the Cabinet and President would approve it and, of course, to give it a go-ahead."

"But the Cabinet would have to discuss it first," Tiglao said. But Tiglao said the President has not ordered the TRB and PNCC to suspend the collection of the 29 to 60 percent increase in tolls.*Carlito Pablo*

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OPINION

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Coup plotters

EDITORIAL

EVEN in the annals of military reform, history repeats itself: first as tragedy, then as farce. In the 1980s, the country had to come to terms with the devastating legacy of Col. Gringo Honasan and his band of military adventurists. In the first years of the 21st century, the focus is on the elusive character of men like the self-styled army captain, the late Baron Cervantes.

Honasan, now a senator of the Republic, mounted three coup attempts. The first, in February 1986, was discovered even before it could be launched, but was ultimately redeemed by People Power I. The second and the third, in August 1987 and December 1989, were destructive not only in terms of lost lives and property damage but above all in economic impact. It is not an exaggeration to say that, in many respects, the Philippine economy in 2002 is still struggling to reach pre-1989 levels.

To be sure, there was an inexorable logic to the ill-fated political experiments of Honasan and the other officers of the Reform the Armed Forces Movement. By the time the dictator Ferdinand Marcos called for a snap election, the military had been thoroughly politicized. Between 1972 and the February 1986 election, the graduates of the elite Philippine Military Academy had reached maturity, not only in a martial law society, but in a martial culture. When a nation frames its fate in terms of a national-security paradigm, national-security officers learn to identify themselves as a political class—only with smarter uniforms and better discipline.

One of the key struggles during the Aquino and Ramos administrations, therefore, was the de-politicization of the military; the comprehensive quiet on the defense front throughout the 1990s is the best proof that, by and large, that struggle was waged successfully.

That silence was broken in January 2000 when, in a direct action, the people gathered in the hundreds of thousands to force the ouster of a president who had lost the moral ascendancy of his high office and the legitimacy to continue in it.

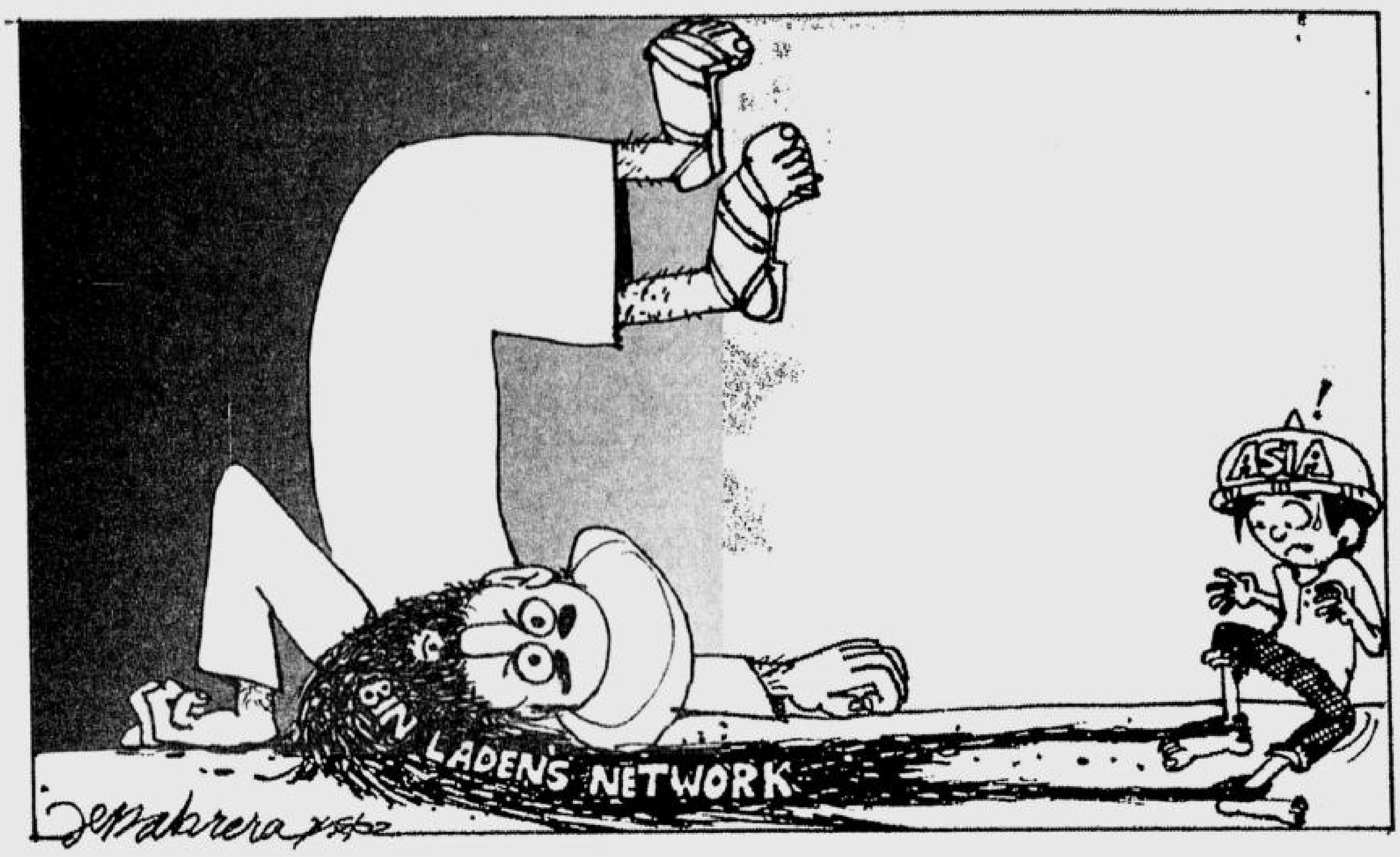
The decision of the defense establishment to support the direct action was one of the most critical factors that led to the success of People Power II. Sadly, it also led a number of people, civilians as well as soldiers, to see the political opportunity: a military-backed power grab loomed as a viable short cut to Malacañang.

Let us make the distinction clearer. In the 1980s, the opportunity was seized by military adventurists whose experience and education taught them to act as a political class. Today, the opportunity is eyed mostly by political adventurers, ready to use the military—and the media—to grab power for themselves.

It is in this context that the enigma of Cervantes has taken shape.

Cervantes, who was killed by a still unidentified man on Dec. 31, was so mysterious his own parents did not even know whether he was married. As it happens, Cervantes was engaged as a consultant of National Security Adviser Roilo Golez. But for quite some time, he passed himself off as the "founder" or "organizer" or "spokesperson" of an alphabet soup of alleged military associations, beginning with RAM, and then with the Young Officers Union, and then Aklas Pilipino, and so on. Officers and members of these or other organizations have come out to deny that Cervantes was who he said he was. He was not even an army captain, but a second lieutenant drummed out of the service twice. And yet he had a gift for being in the right place at the right time—most notably, on the day the defense establishment withdrew its support from the Estrada administration.

For some time, Cervantes appeared on TV shows and newspaper pages as the representative of an identifiable sector in the military: young, idealistic officers who had their feet on the ground and their country's interests at heart. Now, swamped in a deluge of information after his death, we are not so sure. We do not know for certain whether he was on the side of the law or not, whether he was clamping down on coup plots or palming off coup rumors. We know only this: the very ambiguity of his life at the point of death offers proof that the history of military reform has just repeated itself.



Misuari free abroad could become the new Bin Laden

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THE MACAPAGAL administration is betraying its weakness. It doesn't know what to do with Nur Misuari. Some of our leaders, particularly those in Mindanao, notably Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao Gov. Parouk Hussin, are inclined to let him live in exile abroad. They're afraid Misuari back here would mean more trouble as, according to them, he still has a following in Mindanao. This is a sign of cowardice and I hope the President is not convinced by their arguments.

But the President seems to be afraid of Misuari, too, and would prefer him to be away from the Philippines so she can concentrate more on her election in 2004. That is why she is dragging her feet on having him repatriated here in spite of the announced impatience of Malaysia to get rid of him. He is supposed to be fetched from Malaysia on Jan. 15 but I think the President is looking for excuses to keep him away from here and the statements of Hussin and Pimentel may be part of those excuses.

True, Misuari back here would be bothersome to the administration, but don't they realize that Misuari would be more trouble abroad? He could be the next Osama bin Laden if he is allowed to move freely abroad. Misuari is a genius at recruiting fighters and soliciting financial support. Indeed, he may link up with Bin Laden's al-Qaida (if he has not yet done so) even if Bin Laden is killed or captured. Thus, the Philippines will be letting loose another terrorist on the world by abdicating its duty of prosecuting and jailing one already virtually in its hands. All because of cowardice.

Cowardice is evident because the reluctance to repatriate Misuari is the opposite of the government policy toward other thorns in the side of the administration. Former President Estrada wants to go abroad (for treatment of his arthritic knees) but we don't want to let him go. We asked Jose Maria Sison of the CPP-NPA to come home but the latter doesn't want to. But here is Misuari whom Malaysia wants to drop like a hot potato on our laps—where he belongs—and we are hemming and hawing about accepting him.

Ano ba talaga Ate Glo? Can't you show some backbone? In your oath of office, you swore to uphold our Constitution and enforce the laws. You swore to prosecute and punish those who violate our laws. Misuari is one such violator. Why are you hesitating to prosecute and punish him?

You are encouraging other rebels the way other kleptocrats have been encouraged by the snail's pace in the prosecution of the Marcoses and their cronies.

You are showing that rebels can do their thing here and then escape to some other country and they won't be bothered there. Then they can regroup and strengthen their forces and then come back here to sow more trouble. I don't need a crystal ball but I think that's what Misuari will do. He has done it before, he can do it again.

Ms President, don't abdicate your duty just because it is more convenient for you.

* * *

Are we going back to a Marcos-style dictatorship? It looks like it, judging by the recent order of President Macapagal to course all government press statements through a "clearinghouse" headed by Press Undersecretary for Broadcast Manuel Sanchez. That's what Marcos did when he imposed martial rule. Sanchez is the new Tibo Mijares of the Macapagal administration. Although Francisco Tatad was the official press secretary at that time, Mijares was the unofficial press czar who did what Sanchez is doing now, censoring the press statements of government officials. Let me remind Sanchez of what happened to Mijares. When he had outlived his usefulness, Mijares, according to rumors, was made to jump, without any parachute, from a plane flying over Manila Bay.

When President Cory Aquino took over, one of the first things she did was to restore press freedom and made "transparency" a policy of her administration. Transparency was continued by the two succeeding administrations until Ms Macapagal thought of this "clearinghouse." The excuse: "So that the government will speak with one voice." That was also the excuse of Marcos then.

The first shot was fired when Sanchez chastised Solicitor General Simeon Marcelo for saying that he is not in favor of the San Miguel-Kirin deal. What's wrong with that? Marcelo was voicing his opinion as a legal expert. In legal issues, it is the Department of Justice and the solicitor general who speaks for the entire government. How dare a mere press undersecretary overrule them?

Has the President already made up her mind to accept the SMC-Kirin deal? That says a lot about the dim prospects for the coco levy fund. Does it mean that even if there are legal infirmities in the deal, she would still insist in the deal pushing through?

But let me remind the President and her undersecretary: No "clearinghouse," no censorship will stop negative stories from appearing in the press—for that is obviously the purpose. On the contrary, journalists will only strive to discover more irregularities. Because censorship is a symptom that the government is hiding something.

Censorship didn't work during the Marcos regime; it won't work now. As we have seen, a robust underground press was born. That was how the INQUIRER was born. This administration should learn from the lessons of the past.

* * *

Comments are welcome at asiseeit@pacific.net.ph

Wrong tack

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THE QUESTION isn't just whether it should be done or not. The question is whether it can be done at all.

That is Linda Montayre's threat to lead a People Power IV to oust President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo for her failure to live up to the dreams of People Power II. Government supporters scoff at the idea, saying Montayre is scarcely a charismatic figure, like Cory or Erap, and represents no large sector of society, like Jaime Cardinal Sin (the Church) or Fidel Ramos (the military). She doesn't even represent civil society, as she claims she does, much of which has apparently disowned her. They miss the point.

People Power II at least, if not People Power I, was **not** the product of charisma. It did not happen because of Cory, Sin, and/or Ramos, the key figures of Edsa I. Certainly, it did not happen because of Ms Macapagal, who will forever remain indebted to the first three. People Power II in fact was a real wonder. Time's Anthony Spaeth would dismiss it as little more than mob rule, which is ridiculous because if it were so, you want to know how any mob could possibly have ousted the most charismatic president this country has ever known. That was the wonder of it, how the improbable, which was bringing down an immensely popular but immensely corrupt president, came true.

Credit that to many elements. Above all, the mythical one, which is the common denominator of the past Edsas—yes, even "Edsa III," which I keep putting in quotation marks to suggest its trick-mirror quality, or its reflection of Edsa in distorted form; if you're a fan of Superman, think of Bizarro. All the Edsas were a morality play pitting the forces of good versus evil. The first one was clearly so, pitting as it did Marcos and Cory, a morality play that moreover took on the added aspect of the Joan of Arc story, of an innocent woman come to release her country from a despot.

The second Edsa was more complex, and as I said, the more unlikely one. I've always maintained, and still do so, that what made it possible was the "melodrama" that was the impeachment trial. That was what established it in the mind of the public as a struggle between good and evil. One that had underdogs (the prosecutors, the minority senators) fighting against bullies (the de-*campanilla* defense lawyers, the pro-Erap senators), which is the stuff of which myths are made. The impeachment trial became more popular than any Mexican *telenovela*—whole offices ground to a halt whenever it played—which was what drew in the masses to Edsa II. Without that morality play, or melodrama, or *telenovela*, Edsa II would have remained largely an elite or middle-class movement, as pro-Erap people keep insisting—wrongly—to this day. More to the point, it would not have happened at all. There would have been no people to make it "people power."

The third one was the most complex of all, depicting a morality play of a different, even grotesque, kind. It was grotesque in that it presumed Erap to be the savior of the poor, the messiah who would rescue them from their abject lot. It was mythic in its resolute refusal to acknowledge the results of the impeachment trial—"Sure, he stole," as one vendor put it, "but he did it for us." But it was not so grotesque in that it sprung from a very real situation, which was the spectacular deprivation of two-thirds of Metro Manila residents who lived in cardboard boxes in the bowels of the city. Like the past two Edsas, it had its share of heroes and villains, the villains taking the form of Cory, Sin, Ramos and Ms Macapagal, who became the scheming Pharisees in this version of the "Pasyon." Or in more secular terms, as the rich who oppressed the poor *bida—porbida!*—in this poor man's melodrama.

None of this is present today. There is no stark divide between good and evil, rich and poor, *bida* and *kontrabida*, notwithstanding Montayre's efforts to make it so. Why people seem to think people power is the easiest thing to mount in this country, I'll never know. There is no evidence for it. In fact, there is evidence only to the contrary: It is the hardest thing for Filipinos to exert themselves to act heroically—or, let us forget the heroically, just to act. The miraculous thing about the past Edsas is that they happened at all. They are not the sort of thing we do because of ourselves, they are the sort of thing we do in spite of ourselves.

Of course none of this is to say that Montayre has no reason to criticize the President, or that she has no reason to mount a campaign to take the President to task for betraying the movement that put her in power. I myself think the current President is one who would do well to practice what she preaches. She wants everybody to stop politicking when everything she does—including her recent frenzied sorties to the provinces, beating the start of the 2004 electoral campaign period by three years—smacks of politicking. She wants everyone to stop trying to be *pogi* and buckle down to work when all she has done for the poor is try to win *pogi* points with token visits to Payatas and waving her hands at its grimy residents. Which in any case has not made her very *pogi* with the families of the three *bangkang papel* boys to whom she promised the moon.

But all this only makes Ms Macapagal a bad President, not a tyrannical one. An object of detraction, not an object of opprobrium. The latter being what people power is all about. We make it a practice of removing bad presidents through people power—or we try to, since we can't do it anyway—and we will have no presidents left. There is a perfectly legal, moral and rational recourse to the problem of bad presidents, which Montayre should really redirect her efforts to. It is to make sure bad presidents are not voted into power.

That includes presidents who were never voted into power in the first place.

* * *

Comments are welcome at dequiros@vasia.com

Drilon pooh-poohs 'longest Senate coup'

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THERE are reports that the political opposition, in alliance with one faction of the old military adventurers, is planning massive rallies and demonstrations in Metro Manila during the first anniversary of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's assumption into power later this month. The aim is to whip up enough people power to overthrow her, and a huge war chest is reportedly being made available to recruit people from the various former bastions of deposed President Estrada's support in Metro Manila and the nearby provinces. But the broad base of the movement, I heard, will still come from the El Shaddai of Mike Velarde. The problem, however, is that together with the mass protests some destabilization moves are being planned, and very much a part of the scenario, had it not been apprehended, was the huge cache of explosives from Sangley.

* * *

I frankly find it difficult to believe that Velarde would still cast his lot with the opposition as it is now constituted, considering the massive discredit to which it has sunk in the past few months. It cannot be money, for Velarde is a very rich man. But he should rethink things: the majority of his followers come from the *masa*, and the instability that will ensue from such protest activities will harm them first and foremost. What popular leaders like him ought to do instead is to help move this country.

When I heard the reports of the massive actions, I queried whether recruitment among the poorer areas is still possible, considering the inroads that the President has made in them. My informants replied that with a lot of money, people can be recruited. I wonder if the administration is doing anything to blunt the planned mass actions.

* * *

I spoke briefly by phone yesterday with Senate President Franklin Drilon who had just arrived from the United States, and I queried him whether he cut short his trip to Hawaii for a conference there, to tackle the rumors of a coup in his chamber. He laughed and said that he had really meant to be home by Jan. 6, as attested by his memo to Majority Leader Loren Legarda before his departure. The Senate chief pooh-poohed the reported coup, stressing that his opponents had been planning it for the last six months, and it has become "the most publicized coup in Senate history." He stressed that he cannot see any one of his 12 colleagues in the majority moving from where he or she is.

We went one by one over the 12 senators, and it's hard to see indeed who would defect. Certainly, not Rene Cayetano, he said, and we both had a good laugh about the reference to Cayetano's assiduous guarding of Drilon's flanks in order to assure a transfer of power to himself, as agreed between them, in the middle of their term. I countered, in fact, that it would be to Drilon's advantage if he could pull two or three from the opposition to join the majority, as that would strengthen his hand and enable him to concentrate on the task of legislating crucial bills in his one year in office. He agreed.

* * *

By the way, going over the list of opposition senators, I realized quite suddenly that Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. really doesn't have any real supporter in that group, except occasionally, Sen. Serge Osmeña. It then occurred to me, if there would be a change of power, would Pimentel become Senate chief as he has announced? Not by the minority's composition, for they seem to be followers of Sen. Edgardo Angara. In a change of power, I cannot see Angara handing over the crown to Pimentel; I think Angara would crown himself. On the other hand, could this be the reason why Angara was quoted as assuring that Pimentel would remain the minority leader? *Hanggang* minority *na lang ba si* Pimentel?

* * *

Pampanga Vice Gov. Mikey Arroyo, the President's eldest son, called up this column yesterday to reassure its readers that he has not authorized anyone to get into deals or raise funds on his behalf. Mikey was reacting to an item here earlier that called the attention of the President and her family to the fact that a number of people appear to be freely using their names in order to bag certain deals from the government. I had cited how a minor local government official from Central Luzon, who claimed to be close to Mikey, had tried to talk the son of a friend of mine into helping him get some deals from a government corporation, with the assurance that Mikey and he would take care of him. The local official even handed him Mikey's calling card. The vice governor stressed that he has no foundation and neither is he raising funds for anything, and that the First Family is not allowed by law to do business with anyone. "Please assure your renders that if I have to act on an official matter, it will also be accompanied by an official communication," said Mikey, "Until then, I have not authorized anyone to get into any deals or raise money on my behalf."

* * *

A new era in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao was recently ushered in with the inauguration as new ARMM governor of Parouk Hussin, a former rural doctor and rebel. With him goes the best wishes of every right-thinking Filipino, for his success would be pivotal in moving Mindanao away from strife and conflict into the economic development and prosperity it deserves. The hope and expectation is that Hussin will be able to turn the ARMM around, which his predecessor, Nur Misuari, miserably failed to do despite his background as a UP political science professor and former MNLF chief.

Hussin is well-equipped to develop the ARMM as he has been promised more than $100 million in financial aid from the United States and international financial institutions to use for its rehabilitation and development. We are given to understand that $20 million will be made available by the Bush administration upon Hussin's inauguration. That's indeed a lot of money, and President Macapagal has ordered him to use it effectively and judiciously.

* * *

A lot will depend, however, on whether Hussin would be able to break from the traditional leadership mold. The problem with the traditional Muslim leadership in the past, however, is that they have this clan mentality which is detrimental to the development of Muslim Mindanao. The traditional thinking seemed to be that the clan that gets into power has a blanket authority to use funding any which way, and this has usually translated into the improvement of the clan members' lot alone, leaving the majority of the people very poor and sorely lacking in education, health and basic services through generations. Huge amounts of money were poured into Muslim Mindanao, during Misuari's tenure, but despite this the neglect has been palpable. Let's hope and pray that the new governor will deliver, for the expectations are high and it may be Mindanao's last chance to prevent the social powder keg from exploding.

The floods this time

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Carlos Isagani T. Zarate

ROLAND Jumawan, one of Davao City's photojournalists, sang with much feeling the popular song "Bridge Over Troubled Waters" during last Friday's dinner hosted by the Mindanao Business Council. And for a good reason, Jumawan cheated death while on top of one such bridge earlier that afternoon.

While snapping photographs in the midst of chaos spawned by rampaging flashfloods that hit the city last Friday, the Ma-a Bridge where he stood suddenly collapsed. He barely had time to run for his life and reach a safer place. When he looked back, he saw that two others following him were not as lucky: they fell on the rampaging waters below along with the collapsed bridge and as of yesterday they were still among the 11 declared as missing. While Jumawan was thankful for his second lease on life, his thoughts were on the fate of the two.

Recalling the incident, he shared that for that one brief moment, he chose not to be a photojournalist although he could have taken a shot on the distressing image of them clinging for dear life on the collapsing bridge before they were finally swallowed by the floodwaters.

In Talomo Teachers Village which is situated near the banks of the Talomo River, journalist Gingging Valle frantically texted friends *"tabang, baha"* at 2 a.m. when floodwaters began to rise. When Penny, my sister-in-law, and two other journalists responded an hour later, they were shocked to see images of families scampering for safety. Gingging and husband Dodong had to evacuate their family and only returned later that day but were afraid that torrential rains would trigger another round of flashfloods.

Throughout the day, stories like these circulate around the city as Davaoeños swapped updates on the latest "flood" developments. By the end of the day, two persons were reported killed while thousands of families were displaced. At least five vital bridges linking the city to the other provinces collapsed or were partially damaged: the Ma-a Bridge, a bridge in Lubogan, Toril, the Sandawa approach of the historic Governor Generoso Bridge at Bankerohan which was built in 1949, and two other bridges in Lamanan, Calinan and Suawan, Marilog.

Elsewhere in the region, flashfloods also inundated several towns in the provinces of Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur and Compostela Valley, bringing to a total of more than 11,000 families displaced and costing several millions of pesos in damages to property, infrastructure and crops.

It was the worst flood to hit Davao City since 1996. While Davaoeños prided themselves for living in a typhoon-free city, they were not spared by flashfloods, which had become a common occurrence in recent years.

Whereas residents in Luzon and Visayas may dismiss the Davao flashfloods as nothing compared to the havoc wrought by floods and typhoons, Davaoeños, groping to accept such reality, are still beginning to come to terms with this growing threat.

During the 1996 floods, Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte himself was a victim when his family was rescued from the rooftop of their house in Bangkal, also located near the Talomo River. "I already warned the disaster officials to prepare…but, I did not expect it (Friday's flood) to be this worse," said Duterte, who cut short his Manila trip and immediately flew back to Davao last Friday.

Throughout the day, he and Vice Mayor Luis Bonguyan were seen hopping from one place to another to personally oversee the rescue and relief operations. The two officials' hands-on style of dealing with the disaster easily won praises from distraught residents.

But still, a question lingers as to the capacity of the city to respond to emergencies such as these, particularly in the case of flashfloods which, going by the extent and impact of the damage, are getting worse every year. More significant also is the question or disaster prevention and management. The Disaster Coordinating Centers of the affected LGUs are pitifully unprepared and plagued with logistical problems such as lack of equipment and lack of competent personnel to effectively respond to calamities like Friday's flooding.

"At the moment, the city's disaster program focuses more on reactive projects. And if there are training and equipment, most are observed to be not responsive to the needs and situation of the city," noted the Mindanao Times in its Saturday editorial.

And, as in any other disaster elsewhere, the usual causes which have been long-identified again resurrect (since nothing was done about them after they had been identified).

Indiscriminate conversion of prime agricultural land to golf courses and subdivisions, both low-cost and high-end, continued logging and the lack of proper waste management are among the culprits.

As the recent Davao experience has shown, environmental crimes can prove to be disastrous, if not deadlier than other crimes. The challenge now is for the local governments to also show their political will by, among others, running after environmental offenders.

* * *

Another "disaster" that greeted Davaoeños is the kidnapping of a scion of a well-known family here, engaged in the selling and distribution of imported automobiles and the manufacturing of local vehicles. The kidnappers were believed to be members of the dreaded Pentagon kidnap for ransom group. While these kidnappers have pestered several neighboring cities, Davao City seemed to have been spared until Thursday last week. It has been some time since a sensational kidnapping case such as this has gripped the city. Apparently, it looks like a direct challenge to the hard stance against criminality of Duterte, who successfully imposed a firecracker and pyrotechnics ban during the long holidays, a move that even merited praise from the President.

* * *

E-mail comments to karlos_z23@hotmail.com or kar_laws@yahoo.com

The doubling time

COMMENTARY

Dean Jorge Bocobo

PALINDROMES are words like "level" and "kayak" that spell the same word when read from left to right as from right to left. A true aficionado of palindromes gave me this really clever and nontrivial palindrome: "cigar toss it in a can it is so tragic." (Read the letters in reverse order and see that it spells the same phrase.) Making up palindromes must have been a staple of parlor games before the video age and text messaging.

Year 2002 A.D., into which we have quietly slipped, impossibly quick, is a so-called "palindrome year" because its spelling is the same forwards or backwards. There won't be another palindrome year for over a century, in 2112 A.D., and after that, only eight other years in the whole Third Millennium, namely, 2222, 2332, 2442, 2552, 2662, 2772, 2882, 2992 A.D. All are sufficiently far in the future as to be commercially useful to prophets and seers, courtesy of the illiterate, innumerate masses who are so susceptible to the twisted arts of the science of numbers, dates and statistics.

Speaking of statistics, they were a major part of the administration's year-end public relations campaign to project a competent economic team working under an able economist President, treading water in a time of world war. But war, it has been said, is the last refuge of economic managers. Let's just hope that the good secretaries of various executive departments addressing the economy, the President's men, are spending as much quality time on the job as on producing those slick Powerpoint presentations.

One of the main statistics discussed was the Philippine annual growth rate, which was estimated to be something like 2.9 percent, or thereabouts. It is important for the public to always view this particular statistic in the context of the population growth rate, which is equal to the number of births minus the number of deaths and minus the number of emigrants. That is because, any economy in which the people, and in particular babies, have adequate food, shelter and clothing, will grow at the natural population growth rate without any help from the government at all.

That is because there is one statistic that is truly unstoppable, the action of population growth. The website of the World Factbook 2001 of the US Central Intelligence Agency lists the estimated population of the Philippines in July 2001 as 82,841,518 men, women and children, along with some interesting statistics. There were an average of 27 births per thousand in the population , 6 deaths and a statistically significant outflow of one emigrant per thousand, composed of overseas workers and people who are permanently leaving for other countries.

The net increase of 20 births per thousand results in a computation of a 2 percent population growth rate. But because of the large number of emigrants leaving the country, it seems to me that a better estimate of the "internal" population growth rate is actually 3 percent per annum going by the 2001 estimates, that is, just the difference between birth and death rates.

So, what's the difference between 2 percent and 3 percent in the population growth rate? Why should we care about such a thing anyway? To see why it matters, it is better to think of population growth in terms of the doubling time, which is the number of years it takes for a given population to double in number.

For example, if we take 2001 as our base year, how long will it take for there to be twice the 82 million people reported in the Factbook? How long will it take for there to be 164 million Filipinos if the 2001 growth rate remains constant from year to year? A handy formula for this kind of question is that the doubling time in years is equal to 70 divided by rate of increase in percent. So if the population growth rate is 2 percent, it will take 70 divided by 2 or 35 years, or the year 2036 A.D. for the population to double in number. But if it's 3 percent then we have to be ready with all the food, shelter, clothing, schooling, working, family needs of 164 million Filipinos in 70 divided by 3 or 23 years, 2024 A.D.

That's the difference between 2 percent and 3 percent in the population growth rate. An even starker comparison would be with a country like South Korea, where sustained population policies produced a 0.89 percent population growth rate, again taking data from the World Factbook 2001. That means that if the growth rate stays constant, South Korea won't be facing the proverbial "twice as many mouths to feed" for almost 77 years. China, with its 1.2 billion people, also has a 77-year doubling time according to the Factbook.

As a matter of record, the Filipino population as of 2001 was said to be comprised of 83 percent Roman Catholics, 9 percent Protestants, 5 percent Muslims, and 3 percent Buddhists and other religions. Of the population above 15 years old, 94.6 percent were reported to be literate, being able to read and write. Males slightly outnumbered females, but have an average life expectancy of just under 65 years, five years less than females, who can expect to live to about 70.

I cannot imagine that the Philippines would be governable or viable if there were 164 million people and our government and society remained in the same state of ineptitude and helplessness. We could be there in just over two decades.

In the meantime, the strain on thin national resources and budgets will grow with every passing year. Each of the those 164 million people must have food, shelter and clothing, in addition to cars, cell phones, schools, etc, whereas our physical environment is already at the point where further Filipino-style urbanization would provoke ecological disaster.

An enlightened population control policy, which the administration studiously avoided in their recent drum- and chest-beating, should not be ignored as a positive economic course of action. Family planning is so much easier to do than all that international investment promotions in an era dominated by the Abu Sayyaf.

Missing ad label

READERS' ADVOCATE

Raul J. Palabrica

NEVER underestimate the ability of the readers to spot minor, yet significant, errors in publication.

This was the lesson I learned from the e-mail of George Moberg, a professor emeritus of English of the City University of New York, now living at San Fabian, Pangasinan, calling my attention to a "Special Report" that appeared in the Dec. 30, 2001 issue of the Inquirer.

The full-page feature described in regular newspaper format, complete with photos, some of the accomplishments of the 11-month-old administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. The articles are well-written and pleasing to the eyes. The layout artist did a good job. Except that a rather innocuous but important item was missing. And the reader's eagle eyes spotted the omission.

Moberg noted that the issue "carries a mysterious full-page feature labeled SPECIAL REPORT, unpaginated but actually Page '12.' The mystery I referred to refers to the fact that though the page insert has five articles, not one of them is in any way identified as either a news item (a report by your journalist), a column, 'opinion,' or any category of writing (like fiction). No bylines, no authors.

"Ghost stories? They may indeed be 'ghost-written,' but behind the mystery a clear-sighted reader quickly discovers public relations language and, in fact, identifies this 'SPECIAL REPORT' page as a (paid or unpaid) advertisement. The content shows plainly that we have here been served an ad for our President and her staff.

"I insist that in the domain of responsible journalism, it's not the hapless reader's job to have to do such guesswork through inference of the text presented, but the newspaper's duty to clearly identify an advertisement or public relations handout and also inform the subscribers if it is paid or unpaid."

Printing lapse

I checked the source of the publication complained of and learned that it was a paid advertisement. It was placed by an advertising agency to inform the public of the administration's accomplishments in agriculture, finance and energy. Placements of this nature are called "advertorials," or, roughly translated, advertisements prepared in news or editorial form.

An advertisement with a similar content came out earlier in the Dec. 28, 2001 issue of the Inquirer and bore the word "ADVT" (the accepted abbreviation for advertisement) at the left-hand portion of the bottom of the page. The same cautionary label, however, was missing in the Dec. 30 advertisement.

The commercial status of the Dec. 30 advertisement should have been spelled out. By failing to put the "ADVT" footnote, the impression was created in the minds of the readers that the page was an integral part of the newspaper's issue for that day. The Inquirer regrets the omission. It did not intend to mislead the readers into believing that the full-page report is an honest-to-goodness news report or feature article. The error resulted from an internal operational lapse for which the responsible party has been held accountable.

Newspaper redesign

I received a letter from a reader, Jocelyn Tolentino, that oozed with maternal love and concern. She wrote on behalf of her 88-year-old mother who has been an Inquirer fan since 1986.

She said that her mother's "reading pleasure is limited to the headlines or whatever she can read in good morning light depending on the clarity of the print. She loves 'Pinoy Nga,' especially way back then when it used to occupy one full page of the Sunday Inquirer Magazine. Now, it has been reduced to a half page. The articles are now printed in fine and light type.

"In my mother's behalf, I'd like to suggest or request that you make the print darker and, if possible, the font size bigger. I know she's just one reader but there could be countless others who have the same difficulty. Who knows this request might convince you to have a large-type edition like the Reader's Digest."

I have received similar requests or suggestions for bigger newspaper-font sizes in the past. If some readers find the font used on the front page bad enough, they get further dismayed at the continuation or jump pages where the font size is usually smaller.

The Inquirer uses the "Times New Roman" font, 10 points, for the front page and most of the inside sections. This particular font and size meet the newspaper's requirements for readable editorial content that can fit in a 34.3 cm x 55.8 cm-sized newspaper.

The reader's request for a newspaper that her mother can read with relative ease will be partially met on Jan. 25. Starting on that date, the Inquirer will undergo a "redesigning" process that will lead to a change in its font and size.

A new font, "Charter," 10 points, will replace the existing font. The newspaper's width will also be reduced from 34.3 cm to 31.75 cm, but the present length will remain

The readers, especially those who suffer from some physical difficulty in reading, will find the new font easier to read. It is taller and clearer in design compared to the "Times New Roman" font. With the reduced width size, the new font will project a "standout" impression that the reader's eye can catch with the least inconvenience.

The font and size transformation of the newspaper is expected to be completed by March 15. The editor in chief will come out soon with an editorial that will explain the whys and wherefores of the adjustment.

If the font change does not alleviate the reader's 88-year-old mother's reading problem, this column is open to other suggestions that will make the newspaper more visually friendly.

Reaction

Last week's article ("Reaction of readers to news and photos"), in particular, that portion describing the contemptuous attitude of expatriate Filipinos toward the Philippines, drew a touching reaction from some Filipinos living abroad who have kept their Philippine citizenship.

Representative of the sentiments expressed by these Filipinos was the e-mail of Adolfo Hinayon who wrote: "I agree with you completely that Pinoys abroad would like to forget they were born in the Philippines. I'm in the Washington, D.C. area and the Pinoys I met here refer to Filipinos in the country as all poor, mercenaries always asking for money, etc.

"I tell them that in the first place they were the ones asking for shoe and shorts sizes, etc. and then they tell everybody that their relatives think they pick money from the streets. I always tell them not to ask for sizes and give the impression that they are loaded.

"They should tell their relatives that life is hard in the States, that they hold second or third jobs just to keep body and soul together. The problem with Pinoys in the States is they want to make '*yabang*' that they are loaded when in fact most of them are wallowing in credit card debts.

"I told them to tell the truth that like the Pinoys back home they have no money, stop making '*yabang*' and living in lies. I'm sure it will have a cathartic effect on their lives."

* * *

The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City." Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

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What's the real score on Malampaya?

THE DEPARTMENT of Energy's response to queries on the country's expectations from the Malampaya gas project was "Malampaya will make RP 52-percent self-sufficient in energy." (PDI, 12/30/01) The DOE is intentionally evading questions which require straightforward answers; they are in fact diverting the people's attention with hifalutin words as "self-sufficient in energy."

But let's see what the DOE has to say. So what if we're 52-percent self-sufficient in energy? Make that even 100 percent. Can Energy Secretary Vicente Perez now say that electricity will be cheaper? Tell us in simple Filipino: *Bababa na ba ang singil para sa kuryente? Magkano? Kailan?* Also, the DOE says that crude oil imports will be reduced by $700 million annually. So what? Whatever savings in imports will be remitted just the same. Look, the monthly electric bills which consumers pay the distributors will be paid to the power plants, which will pay the consortiums, which will then exchange the pesos for dollars, then send the money to their head offices. What savings are we therefore talking about? At least in imports, we see the crude oil coming from the Middle East to our country. But in Malampaya's case the natural gas is coming from Palawan only (and it's our own gas) and we have to pay 100 percent to the consortiums.

In its press release, the DOE also mentioned that "the $5 billion is the largest and most important investment in the history of the Philippines." Did the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas see any of those dollars? Was it recorded at all so that when it's time to repatriate those "investments," proof can be presented that those dollars were indeed remitted to the Philippines? The truth is that this investment will consist mostly of salaries, hazard pay, hotel bills, R&R, airfare and other benefits of the engineers and technicians who will come here, plus the cost of imported rigs and pipes. Were these recorded in the Bangko Sentral to qualify them as part of the investment? Okay, let's call it investment, but did that $5 billion in any way improve the lives of Filipinos (save for a few employees)? Did it spur economic activity, except for Shell and Texaco? I repeat my previous statement—these guys are here as salesmen and agents for their respective head office. They are not investors. Imagine the $3 billion that we pay them annually for the crude oil imports, plus the P3 billion local income. To be kinder, "businessmen" is a more apt description of these people, out to help themselves, more than anybody else. Let's not abuse the word "investors" on them.

The press release further stated that "with the expected yearly savings as a result of the natural gas project, the country is expected to earn at least $13 million (typographic error?) in royalties within its 20-year period of operation." So it now appears that the savings and the royalty earnings are one and the same, and as stated above, since there is no $700-million annual savings, then there is no royalty earnings. In the INQUIRER's Oct. 16 issue, Perez categorically said that there will be annual savings of $700 million, and $8 to $10 billion royalty earnings for 20 years. For the size of Malampaya, this is very small, and it's not even there yet.

So if the Philippines will not enjoy cheap electricity and the government will not be earning revenues even in royalty (not to mention proceeds of sales of Malampaya's gas), what good is Malampaya to us? With such a big deposit right beneath us it could not even help us balance our budget. Three presidents—Corazon Aquino, Fidel Ramos and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo—were present in the Tabangao, Batangas, inaugural last Oct. 16, 2001. Not one of them could say, then and now that "with Malampaya, electricity will be cheaper."

LETTERS

It's back to the Spanish time once again. A few sailors came to our shores, named our country after their king, took dominion of the whole Philippines, collected taxes from the people, made our forefathers their servants and took away our natural and mineral resources. Something similar, and more sinister is happening once again and our own DOE is even the "spokesperson."

To be kind to Perez, I don't want to call him naive, but in heaven's name, will he please say how much he can save in electric bills, and how much will the government earn from Malampaya? *Kung wala siyang masabi, puwede ba iba na lang?* Will the President do something about it? Will Congress or whoever?

And please, no more talk of investments, savings and self-sufficiency. Just tell us how much!—**ALBERTO F. DEL PILAR, 1 Apo St., Suburban Heights Subd., Cainta, Rizal**

Cheaper oil prices in Bangkok

DURING my trip to Thailand last Dec. 27, I had the opportunity to list the prices of petroleum products from a PTT gasoline station close to the Hadyai airport. I also noted the prices of certain medicines that I bought from one of the pharmacies in Bangkok. Below are the Bangkok oil prices for comparison with prices in our local market with the reference exchange rate of P1.17 to one Thai baht.

PTT gas station	Baht	Peso equivalent	Shell (Davao City)	Difference
Premium	14.07	16.46	17.45	+0.99
Unleaded	13.07	15.29	16.87	+1.58
Diesel	11.49	13.44	13.60	+0.16
Medicine	Pharmacy in Bangkok		Pharmacy in SM (Davao City)	
Plendil (5 mg) per tablet	15	17.55	33.25	+15.70

The above items show significant price differences, making the local oil companies monopolistic, arrogant and opportunistic.—**ALEXANDER L. PIOQUINTO, 11-B Palosapis St., Nova Tierra Village, Lanang, Davao City**

How can we buy Filipino?

HOW can the government convince our people to buy Filipino products (in order to boost the economy) when the people themselves know that top government officials wear Rolex and Cartier watchers, ride in expensive cars like Mercedes-Benz, BMW and drink imported liquors and wines?

The same thing happened in the United States years ago when then Chrysler chair Lee Iacocca urged everybody to "buy America." The American people questioned his sincerity because Iacocca appeared in print advertisements for Don Diego cigars which were made in the Dominican Republic.—**PAUL R. MORTEL, MBLA Court, Malanday, Marikina City**

Misinformation on ODS imports

I AM an associate professor here at the University of the Philippines in Diliman and I have been a member of the Environmental Impact Assessment Review Committee at the Environment Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources from the time of President Cory Aquino to the present. I would like to call attention to some points regarding our national patrimony and pride.

Some officials of the deposed Estrada administration are possibly manipulating some personalities, including respected members of the House. Ironically, these people have become unwitting mouthpieces for officials like Peter Anthony Abaya, the former executive director of the EMB. Abaya himself seems to be feeding unsuspecting personalities with information more to put him in a position to vie for a deputy or an assistant secretary at the DENR and not really to safeguard public interest.

Abaya accuses, for example, Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez of incompetence for allegedly using "an erroneous mathematical formula" to compute the annual allowable importation volume for ODS. He points out that the increase in ODS importation volumes during his watch is allowed under the Chemical Control Order for ODS, i.e. a 75 percent increase from the baseline (1996) import figure. What he conveniently fails to factor into the discussions are the principles, legal tenets and programs governing the importation and use of ODS in the Philippines.

For one, as a signatory to the Montreal Protocol, the Philippines is committed to phase out importation and use of ODS completely by 2010. Prior to that year, reduction is set to effect from baseline figures, as follows: 25 percent in 2001, 50 percent by 2005 and 85 percent by 2008. This plan is clear in the 1993 Philippine Country Program for Ozone Layer Depletion, and in the updated version of the program issued in 1999 during the Estrada administration.

As of 1998, initially during Abaya's term at the EMB, the Philippines has been on track in terms of this phase-out plan. Consumption and importation have steadily declined since 1995 with a 21 reduction registered by 1998. Surprisingly, however, by 2000 and still under Abaya's term, the figures have increased by an alarming 40 percent compared to 1999.

Abaya explains that the increase is due to the Chemical Control Order issued by then Environment Secretary Antonio Cerilles in February 2000 that modifies the baseline (1996) to include "the allowance of 75 percent, to consider unaccounted for imports." This modification has been effected through an inconspicuous footnote about "unaccounted imports" to Section 3.2.5 of DENR Administrative Order No. 2000-18. But what are these "unaccounted imports"? If they have really been previously unaccounted for, how have Cerilles and Abaya been able to determine what these are all about in the first place?

In the context of our country having received an award in the past for its achievements and exemplary resolve to meet its commitments under the Montreal Protocol, this increase in importation is no doubt embarrassing.

Academic degrees do not necessarily make an expert. The case of Abaya may be one such instance where this tenet applies.

I request the members of the House not to be easily seduced into complacency by academic credentials as in the case here.—**AGERICO M. DE VILLA, associate professor, College of Social Sciences and Philosophy, UP Diliman, QC**

Historical errors in 'Yamashita'

THE MOVIE "Yamashita" was haphazardly done. A movie involving historical event(s) or a historical figure should depict facts backed by some realities, and not obviously false representations. "Yamashita" has a number of false representations among which are:

- The December 1941 bombing of Sangley Point was done by high-flying Japanese bombers from Formosa. There was no such thing as strafing by low-flying Japanese planes.
- There were no jeeps yet in December 1941 in the Philippines. The jeeps appeared only when the Americans returned in 1944-45.
- American soldiers in 1944-45 wore olive green uniforms, not khaki as in the movie.
- Indeed, there were small pockets of Japanese (Yamashita) war treasures hoarded by local Japanese commanders, but not in the quantities shown in the movie ready to be brought to Japan. Any treasure that big should have been successfully shipped to Japan earlier in 1942, when Japan was already in complete control of the whole Southeast Asian region. By 1943 the Japanese knew they were losing the war, especially after losing the big battles at Coral Sea and Midway, thus there was no reason for the Japanese to hoard big volumes of treasure in the Philippines.
- When the Japanese were losing battles in the US liberation of the Philippines in 1944-45, Yamashita's army hurriedly retreated to Northern Luzon, but there are no islands in the Cordilleras, as the movie inexplicably showed.
- Japanese soldiers, much more Japanese generals, did not wear Pershing caps, as the movie depicted, when Yamashita was about to be hanged.

The "Yamashita" producers should have at least done a little research to make the movie believable. Research would not have been so difficult since there are many books and historical materials available. This is one reason few Philippine movies do not measure up to world-class standards: lack of research.—**COL. ARMANDO GATMAITAN (ret.), 25 Milkyway, Blue Ridge, Quezon City**

Overloading on MRT being addressed

REGARDING overloading at the Metro Rail Transit, (PDI, 12/18/01) I am glad Joan Oanes agrees with the government's position that the MRT, as well as the Light Rail Transit, is an efficient and effective mode of mass transportation, which explains why the public patronizes them.

Unfortunately, the public's "love" for the MRT far exceeds the government's capacity to expand this mode of mass transportation. Hence, "overloading" may have occurred. I have ordered immediate steps to prevent overloading which poses hazards to the health and safety of the commuting public.

We will pinpoint areas where overloading tends to occur and take steps to abate passenger congestion.

This early, however, we have already taken some measures to reduce overloading, including the construction of escalators in at least 10 terminals of the MRT for the convenience of the commuting public. More important, we have speeded up the extension of the MRT to Monumento in Caloocan City by next year and to link up with the LRT. During the next five years, we will build more MRT and LRT routes to Antipolo City and to the province of Cavite.

I share your concern for the safety and comfort of the commuting public. Rest assured we are making the MRT safer, more convenient and hazard-free.—**PANTALEON ALVAREZ, secretary, Department of Transportation and Communications**

Questioning the unquestionable

PIO Andrade's article (PDI, 12/30/01) on the authenticity of the photograph of Jose Rizal's execution was quite interesting. However, the author points out that: "Filipinos love to embellish our heroes...The execution picture only served to enhance the legend of Rizal."

Does Andrade himself fall into this trap when he cited "eyewitnesses who either wrote or told that Rizal tried but failed to turn around because death was instantaneous"? If he died instantaneously, how did witnesses know or how could they tell that he tried to turn around? Or was their claim born of the romantic urge to portray the man as a legend, his last thought and act speaking of defiance?

Interesting essay nevertheless. Questioning what has been classified unquestionable can also pay off sometimes.—**MANUEL RAMON O. ESCASA, 810 Balintawak St., San Antonio, Biñan, Laguna**

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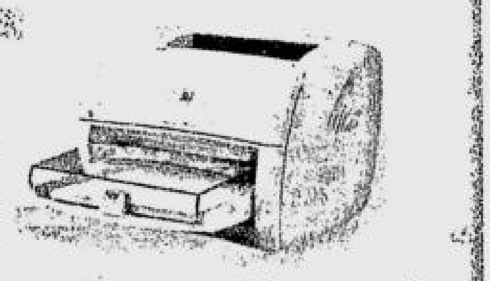

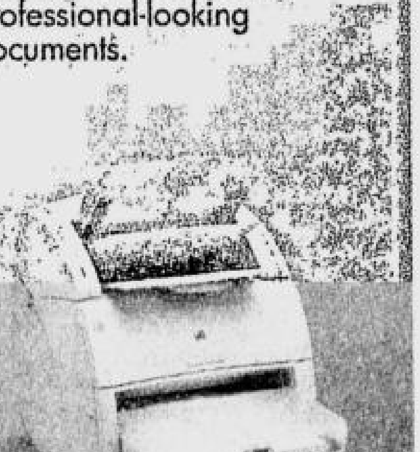

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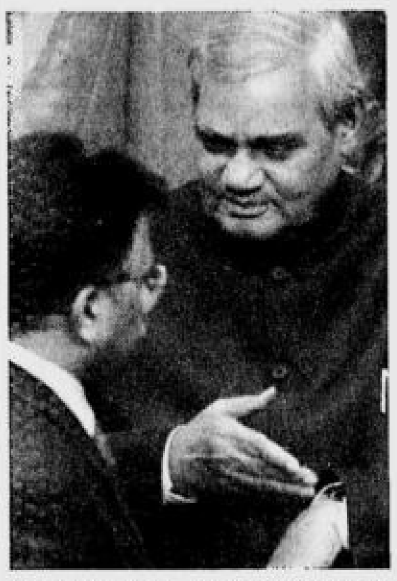
Per DTI-NCR No. 2039 Series of 2001

The WORLD

LUVERNE B. GUECO, EDITOR

Tensions linger despite summit


MUSHARRAF, Vajpayee at the South Asia summit

KATMANDU—The leaders of India and Pakistan left a South Asian summit on Sunday with no easing of tensions between the nuclear-armed neighbors, unable to make good on a promising handshake.

As they went their separate ways, Indian and Pakistani forces exchanged mortar fire on their tense border, further dashing any hopes of a diplomatic solution to the crisis.

Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf briefly broke the ice on Saturday in Kathmandu when he walked up to Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee to extend "a hand of genuine, sincere friendship" after his opening speech at the summit.

The two men shook hands and Musharraf walked away, marking the first time they had met face to face since a rare round of talks abruptly broke off last summer.

On Sunday, the two leaders shook hands again, but without the drama.

"They (tensions) may not have been eased, but they haven't worsened," Musharraf told a news conference after the closing of the summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

Vajpayee said he had had courtesy talks with Musharraf, but nothing substantial had come of them. Musharraf said there had been no "one-on-one" talks.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair is touring the region hoping to help calm the waters and was due to meet Vajpayee on Sunday before going on to Pakistan.

Blair said on Sunday he would urge India's prime minister to move toward dialogue with Pakistan.

"There has to be some very clear rules in this situation and the clearest rule of all is that there can't be any support for terrorist activity," he said.

The long-time foes have amassed troops and artillery along the Line of Control dividing the disputed Himalayan Kashmir region since a December suicide attack on India's parliament in which 14 people, including the five assailants, were killed.

India blamed two Pakistan-based Kashmiri separatist groups for the attack, and has called repeatedly on Islamabad to end support to Muslim guerrillas fighting a holy war against Indian rule in Kashmir, Hindu India's only Muslim-majority state.

Vajpayee repeated the call in his speech to the seven-nation SAARC.

Pakistan has cracked down on the two groups and on Sunday detained yet more suspect militants, police in several southern districts of central Punjab province raiding mosques, homes and offices.

Despite intense speculation that the countries' foreign ministers, if not the leaders, might meet on the sidelines of the event, Indian officials said the rivals had not held a single bilateral meeting at any level during the two days. *Reuters*

US detains former Taliban envoy

WASHINGTON/KANDAHAR, Afghanistan—The US military took into custody the former Taliban ambassador to Pakistan even as its primary targets, Taliban supreme leader Mullah Mohammad Omar and Osama bin Laden, eluded Afghan and US forces.

Mullah Abdul Salam Zaeef, the Taliban's principal spokesperson during the war in Afghanistan and the vanquished movement's highest-ranking official to be captured, joined hundreds of detainees facing interrogation by US officials seeking intelligence for their war on terrorism.

But Mullah Omar, the reclusive cleric who once ruled over almost all of Afghanistan, and bin Laden, accused by Washington of plotting the Sept. 11 attacks that killed some 3,000 people, remained at large.

According to a report from the southern Afghan city of Kandahar, Mullah Omar escaped on motorcycle as anti-Taliban forces closed in on a mountainous area in southern Afghanistan where he was believed hiding.

Three months after the United States went to war in response to the attacks on New York and Washington, President George W. Bush led the country in mourning the loss of Sgt. 1st Class Nathan Ross Chapman, the first American soldier killed by enemy fire.

Chapman died in a gunbattle in eastern Afghanistan, where US troops are hunting remnants of the Taliban and Bin Laden's al-Qaida network.

The new US envoy to Kabul, Zalmay Khalilzad, said the US bombing campaign, launched on Oct. 7, would not end until its aims were met, despite concern among Afghanistan's new anti-Taliban leaders at civilian casualties in recent strikes.

"We're making steady progress in Afghanistan," Bush said during a speech in California. "The evil ones awakened the mighty giant. You know, we're a compassionate people and we're a decent people. But if you come after us, you will learn that you have made a big mistake."

Zaeef, a bespectacled 34-year-old ethnic Pashtun who had sought political asylum in Pakistan after that country broke off diplomatic ties with the Taliban, was deported back to his home country and immediately detained by US forces in Afghanistan. *Reuters*

NOTICE OF 48-HOUR WATER SERVICE INTERRUPTION IN PARTS OF QUEZON CITY AND MANILA

MAYNILAD WATER SERVICES, INC. wishes to inform the public that certain areas in Quezon City and Manila will experience a 48-hour water service interruption from **10:00 p.m., Friday, January 11, 2002 up to 10:00 p.m., Sunday, January 13, 2002.**

The interruption will be due to the interconnection of the newly laid 2200mm LMAQ-3 line to the existing 1200mm line at Batanes St. cor. Sobriedad St., Manila as part of Maynilad's water supply improvement project.

The waterless areas are: **Quezon City :** Galas, Santol, Don Manuel, Dona Aurora, Dona Josefa, Lourdes and San Isidro. **Manila:** Sampaloc, Sta. Cruz, Sta Mesa, Quiapo, San Miguel and Malacanang Palace. Low water pressure to no water will be experienced in Pandacan and Bacood. Residents in the affected areas are advised to store water good for two days.

We sincerely apologize for the inconvenience arising from the interconnection works and ask for the public's understanding and cooperation.

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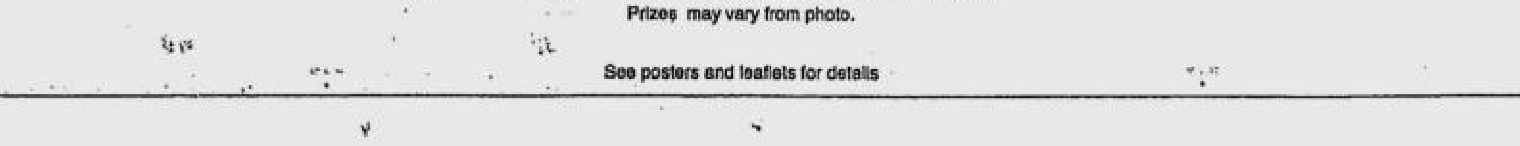

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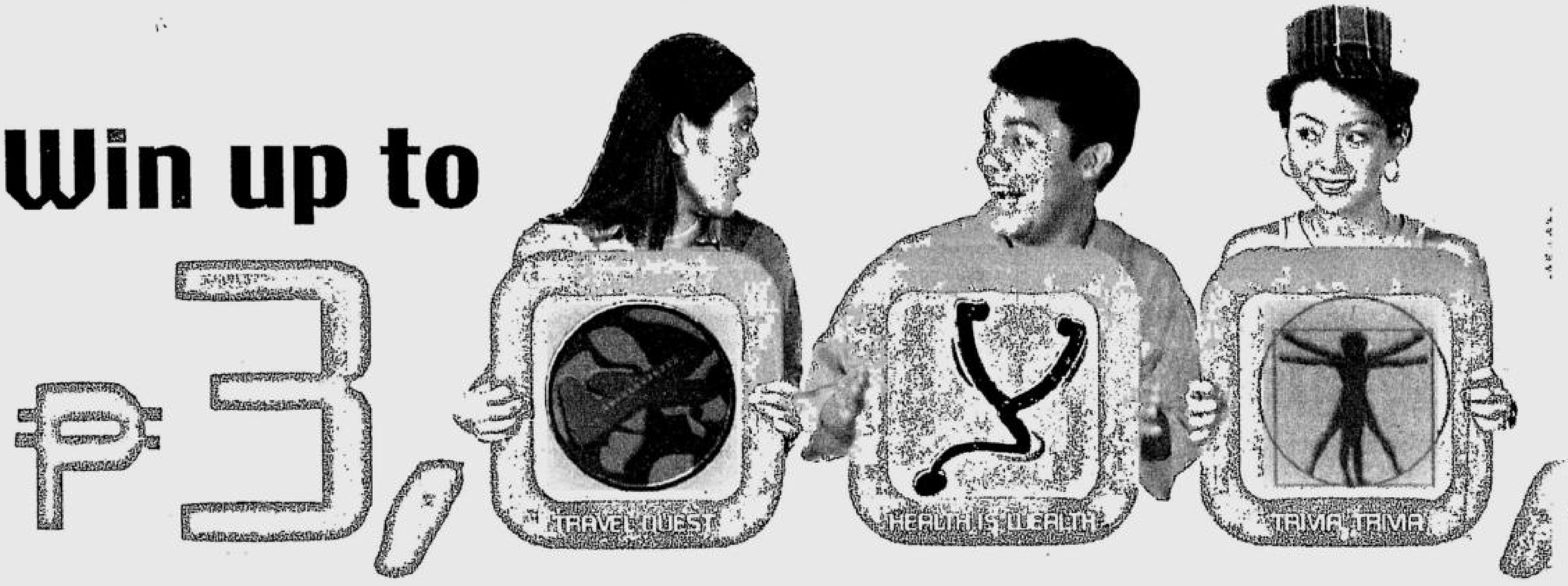

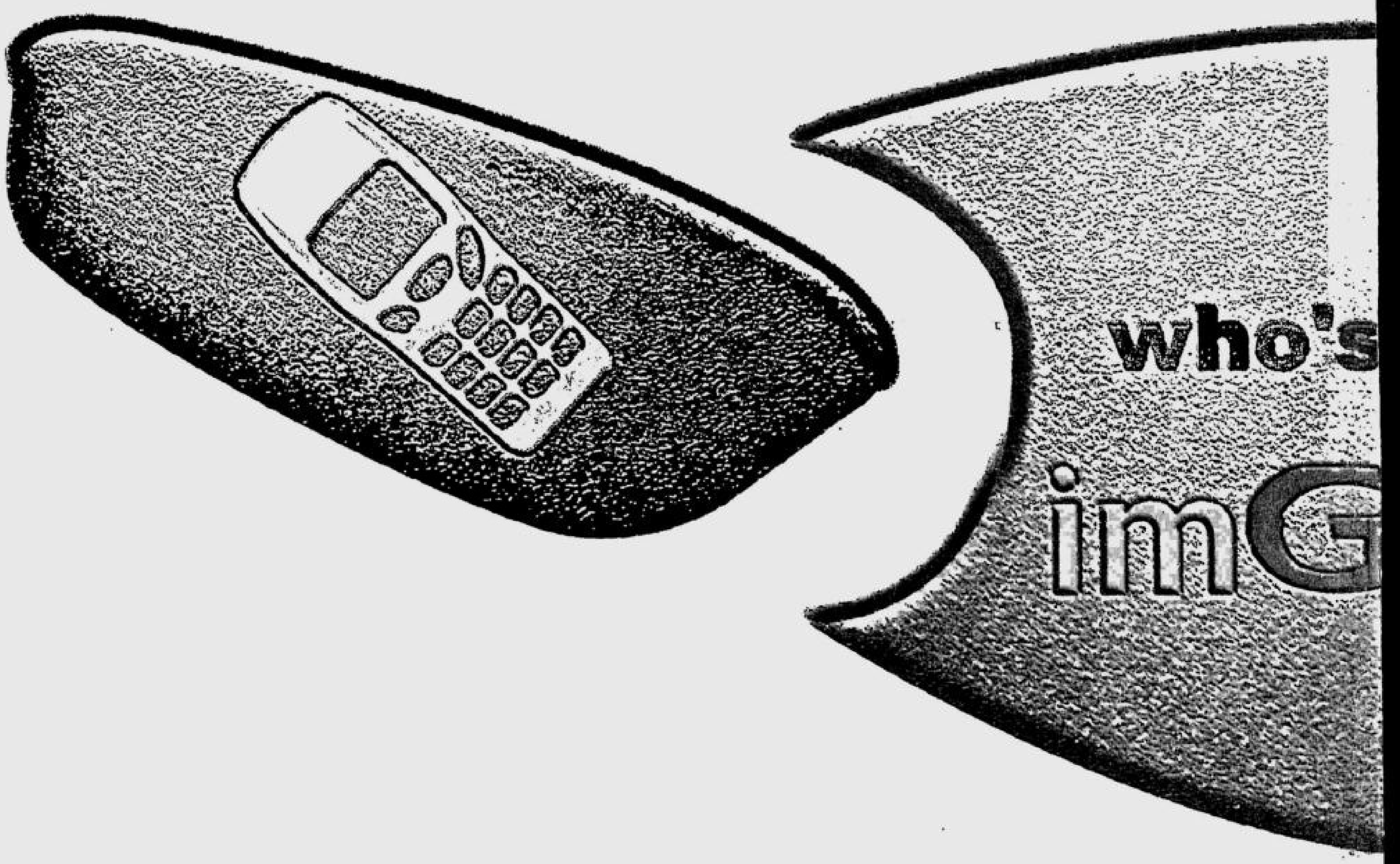

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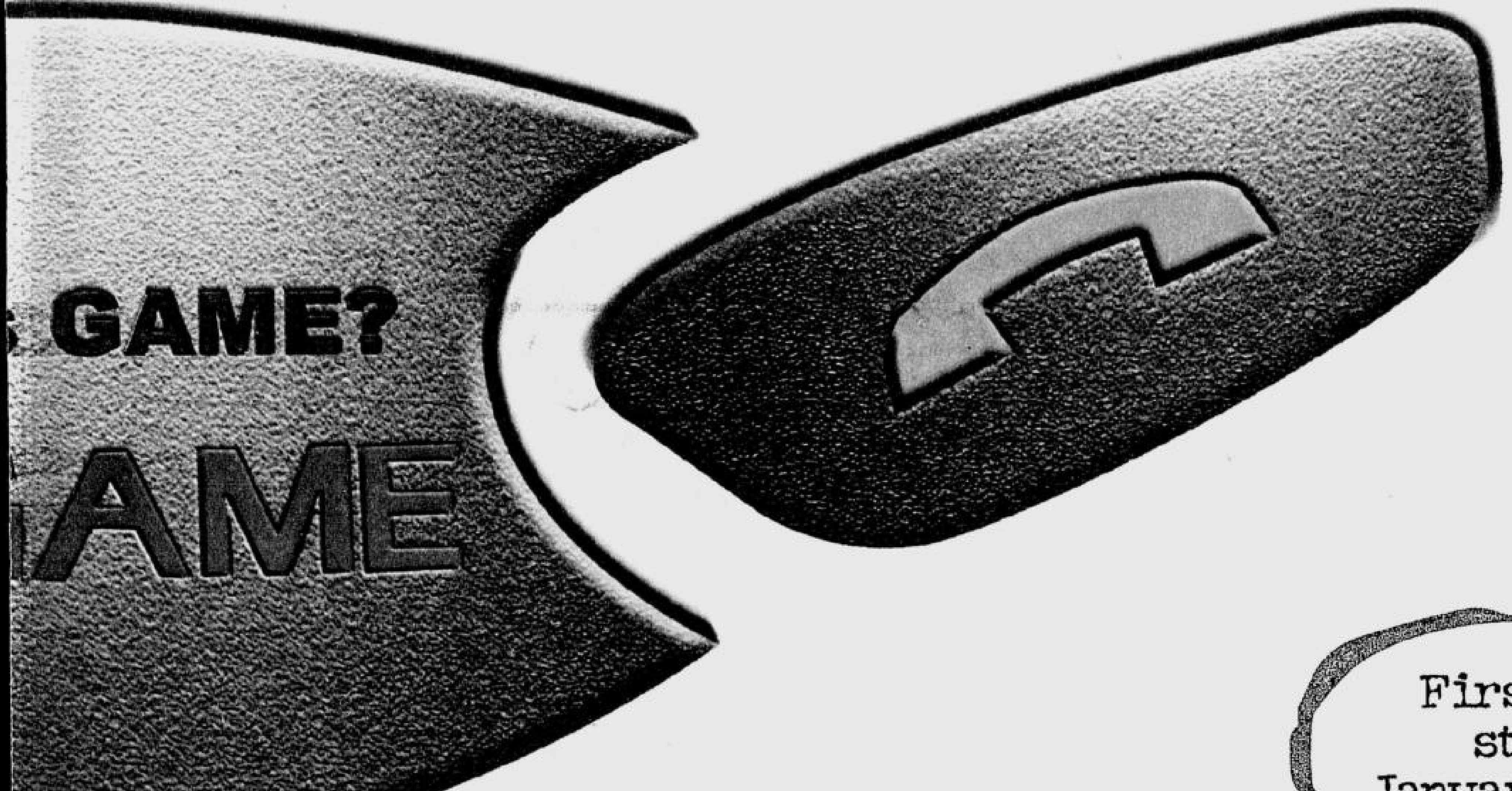

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2002 Calendar of Events

JANUARY

VICENZAORO 1
Fine Jewelry
Vicenza, Italy
13-20 January

Cologne International Furniture Fair
Home Furnishings
Cologne, Germany
14-20 January

FEBRUARY

Spring Fair Birmingham
Giftware, Holiday Decor
Birmingham, UK
03-07 February

e-Services Philippines: An IT Outsourcing and Subcon Exhibition
IT and IT-enabled Services
Manila, Philippines
07-09 February

MARCH

Marble Products Selling Mission to Japan
Marble
Tokyo, Japan
01-06 March

Natural Products Expo West w/ Education Conference
Natural Products
California, USA
07-10 March

Seatrade Cruise Shipping Convention and Exhibition
Processed Food/Fashion
Accessories/ Gift and Souvenir Items
Florida, USA
11-15 March

APRIL

SALONE INTERNAZIONALE DEL MOBILE International Furniture Fair
Home Furnishings
Milan, Italy
10-15 April

Manila F.A.M.E. International
Gifts and Houseware, Holiday Decor & Fashion Accessories
Manila, Philippines
18-21 April

Outsource World
IT and IT-enabled Services
London, UK
24-25 April

MAY

DCI Outsourcing Conference with IT Mission to US*
IT and IT-enabled Services
Los Angeles, USA
19-20 May

resourcEXCHANGE expo
Raw Materials/Supplies
Manila, Philippines
23-25 May

IT Trade & Investment Mission to Australia *
IT and IT-enabled Services
Sydney & Melbourne, Australia
May

IT Trade & Investment Mission to Singapore *
IT and IT-enabled Services
Singapore
May

JUNE

International Animated Film Festival (Annecy 2002)
Animation Services
Annecy, France
03-08 June

Outsource&Subcon Asia Asean Contract Manufacturing & Subcontracting Exhibition for Global Manufacturing Procurement & Outsourcing
Metal Parts and Components
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
04-08 June

BIO-Search
Natural, Herbal, and Organic Products
Manila, Philippines
20-23 June

Food and Hotel South China with Food Mission to South Korea
Processed Food
Guangzhou, China / Korea
26 June - 03 July

ASEAN Fashion Goods Exhibition
Fashion Accessories
Tokyo, Japan
June - August

JULY

In-Store Promotion at Far Eastern Department Store
General
Taipei, Taiwan
18-28 July

AUGUST

Mexican Gift Show
Gifts and Houseware
Mexico
August

SEPTEMBER

Japan Gift Show 2002
Gifts & Houseware
Tokyo, Japan
04-06 September

Selling Mission to Greece
Processed Food, Home Furnishings, & Fashion Accessories
Athens, Greece
27-29 September

OCTOBER

Food Festival in the Sky (in cooperation with Philippine Airlines)
Processed Food
01 October - 31 January 2003

Index Dubai International Furniture & Interior Design Exhibition
Home Furnishings
Dubai, UAE
02-06 October

International Ship Suppliers Association (ISSA) 2002 Convention & Trade Fair
Processed Food
Dubai, UAE
04-06 October

Manila F.A.M.E. International
Gifts and Houseware, Holiday Decor & Fashion Accessories
Manila, Philippines
21 - 24 October

ASEAN Trade Fair
General
Bangkok, Thailand
14-20 October

Industry Search
Industrial Goods and Services
Manila, Philippines
24-26 October

Observation Mission to Canton Fair
Gifts and Houseware
Canton, China
October

ASEAN Food and Beverage Exhibition
Processed Food
Tokyo, Japan
October - December

NOVEMBER

COMDEX/Fall (International Computer Trade Show & Conference)
IT and IT-enabled Services
Nevada, USA
18-22 November

Japan Home Show
Construction Materials
Tokyo, Japan
19-22 November

Asian Ethnic Food Fest
Processed Food
Manila, Philippines
22-24 November

Garden and Pets Show
Horticulture & Pet Care
Manila, Philippines
22-24 November

International Furniture Fair Tokyo
Home Furnishings
Tokyo, Japan
27-30 November

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Duhalde granted broad powers

BUENOS AIRES—Argentina's Congress on Sunday moved a step closer to allowing a currency devaluation after its lower house gave preliminary approval of sweeping powers for new President Eduardo Duhalde to overhaul the economy to turn around deepening recession.

In a marathon session that started Saturday afternoon, the government-dominated lower house gave its preliminary approval to an emergency bill allowing Duhalde to scrap the peso's one-to-one peg to the US dollar and set a new rate.

Having passed the bill in principle, the lower house will debate each clause of the bill, which will then move over to the Senate. The two houses of Congress are controlled by Duhalde's Peronist party and both chambers were expected to approve the bill without any important modifications by the end of Sunday.

After taking office on Wednesday, Duhalde is in a race against the clock as Argentines chafe with the economy all but paralyzed since Dec. 21, when rioting and looting left 27 dead and toppled former President Fernando de la Rua's government.

Medicines including insulin are running short and prices on staples like bread are rising as businesses hedge against devaluation. A $1,000 monthly limit on cash withdrawals remains in place, reducing purchasing power to a trickle and infuriating many middle class Argentines. *Reuters*

US envoy upbeat on Mideast truce

JERICHO, West Bank—US peace envoy Anthony Zinni said Saturday he was "encouraged" by ceasefire talks with the Palestinians, despite the fallout from Israel's seizure of a ship it said was laden with weapons for the Palestinians.

"I am hopeful and encouraged, and think it's going to take cooperation from both sides and deep commitment to get the meaningful ceasefire we need to get this (peace) process on track," Zinni said after meeting in the West Bank town of Jericho with chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erakat.

The retired Marine Corps general—who did not elaborate on the grounds for his optimism—also he would chair a three-way security meeting between Israel, the Palestinian Authority and US intelligence service CIA on Sunday.

Zinni said the meeting would focus on security issues amid the crisis from the seizure of the ship in the Red Sea loaded with 50 tonnes of arms Israel accuses the Palestinians of bringing from Iran to escalate the fighting.

"I am going to start with the trilateral and security issues and that is the beginning point, and will get to those (political) issues when the time is right," he told reporters. *AFP*

Ex-French soldier kills self over child sex abuse reports

ILOILO CITY—A retired French legionnaire committed suicide yesterday amid allegations that he sexually abused boys in an orphanage, which he helped run in Guimaras.

Christian Munk Koefoed, 50, was found hanging inside a hut located at the back of the house of Agapito Tioco on 8 Agate Street, Imperial Subdivision in Molo here.

Tioco is the president of the United Hearts Foundation (UHF) orphanage, which caters to boys who were either orphaned or abandoned by their parents. Koefoed was the vice president.

Koefoed's business card showed that he was a retired lieutenant colonel of the French Army. He was from Saint-Junien les Combes, 87300 Bellac and kept a house in Talisay City.

PO3 Jessie Facton of the Molo Police Station said initial investigation showed that Koefoed killed himself as he could no longer stand the allegations that he sexually abused the boys at the orphanage.

The policemen got the note, written in French, which Koefoed gave to Tioco's wife, Encarnita, on Saturday night after a meeting with UHF officers at a hotel here.

Koefoed had asked that the letter be sent to France. It was addressed to one "Berthrand and the board."

In the letter, Koefoed had asked for support by looking for foster families for the children and for anyone who could help them finish their studies because the orphanage might be temporarily closed.

The Tioco couple said they believed that Koefoed was troubled over the charges as he had told them he would kill himself because of shame.

"We tried to assure him that the foundation can weather the controversy and that we could help him by providing a lawyer. But he was very quiet during the meeting and his face reddened many times," said Encarnita over radio station dyFM Bombo Radyo yesterday.

Dennis Lacerna, a house parent of a UHF orphan, accused Koefoed of molesting the 12-year-old boy whom the Frenchman was sending to school.

Two boys in the orphanage said they caught Koefoed and his ward in a compromising position last March 2001.

Lacerna said he later learned that some boys in the orphanage were also sexually abused allegedly by Koefoed.

The Frenchman, he claimed, had also taken photos of the boys in nude.

Lacerna also claimed that the orphanage was mismanaged as Tioco and other officers were not transparent in running the financial affairs of the institutions.

Lacerna had confronted the Frenchman, who surprisingly admitted his misdeed and his liking for brown boys.

On March 19, Koefoed signed a letter with Lacerna where he promised never to return to the orphanage or to have contact with the children unless he had an operation that would unable him to "have any sexual action."

Lacerna went public on Jan. 4 after he noticed that nothing had changed the way the foundation was being run.

But Tioco said Lacerna's allegations have yet to be proven. He instead accused Lacerna of trying to extort money from the foundation.

Meanwhile, the Department of Social Welfare and Development decided to take custody of the 15 boys at the orphanage.

They will be brought to the DSWD-Western Visayas office based here.

Rose Sanagustin, head of the DSWD-Crisis Intervention Unit, said the foundation has been operating since 1998 even if it had not been accredited to run an orphanage in Guimaras.

Tioco admitted that the foundation had yet to get a license from the DWSD.

The foundation was registered at the Securities and Exchange Commission in 1997. It claimed to be a "Filipino-French non-government organization duly registered in France and in the Philippines."
Ma. Diosa Labiste, PDI Visayas Bureau

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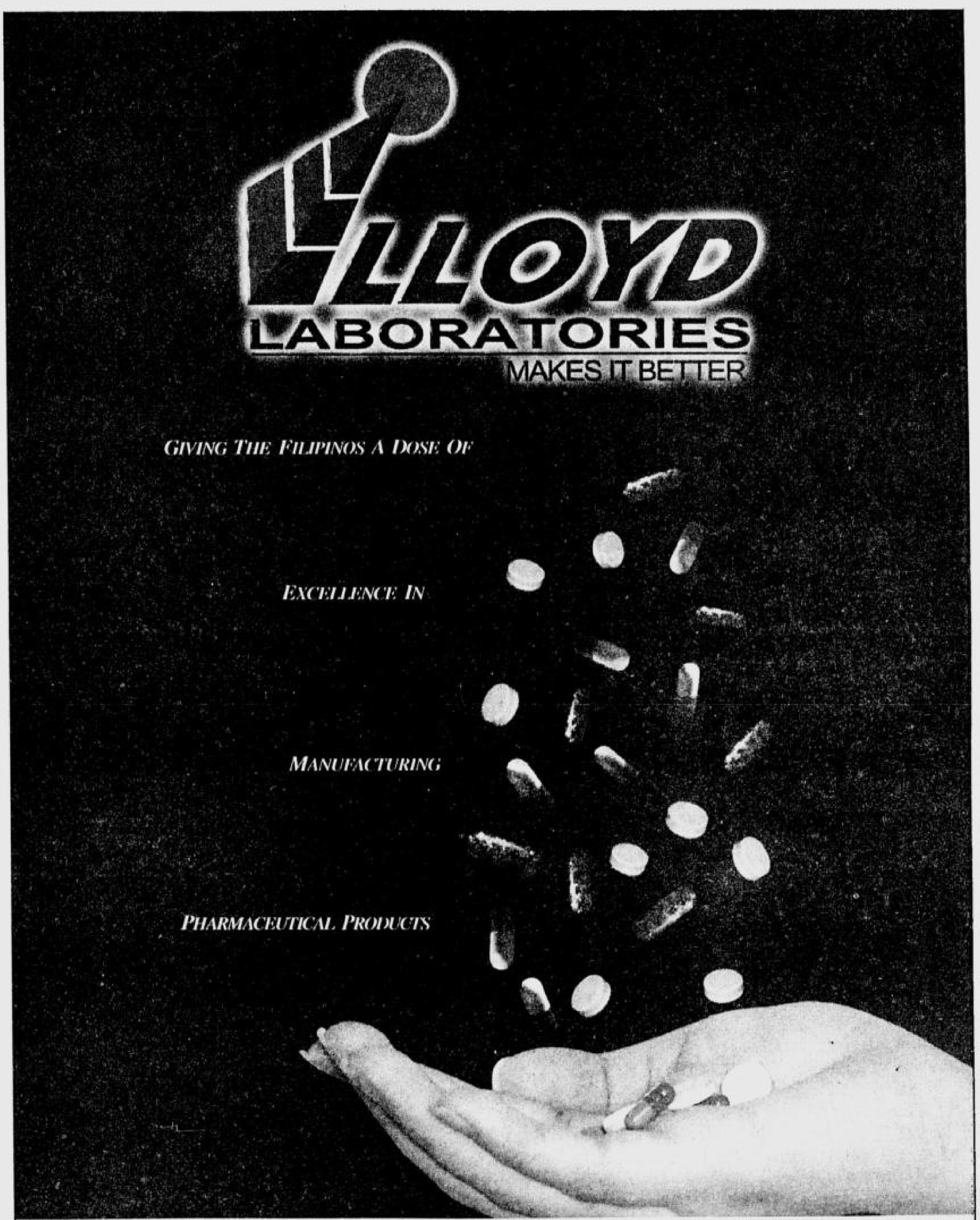

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Priest says US help not needed vs Abu

LAMITAN, Basilan—Former Abu Sayyaf hostage Fr. Cirilo Nacorda said there was no need for the government to seek the help of the United States military or the deployment of nine battalions of soldiers to go after the bandit group.

"We don't need US assistance regarding the problem of Abu Sayyaf and other lawless elements here. What we need is sincerity and dedication," Nacorda said.

He said deploying nine battalions of government troops would be an "overkill."

He said four to five battalions of soldiers would be enough to secure the entire province of Basilan, because of the presence of militiamen and civilian volunteer groups.

"I believe that this problem is prolonged to justify the country's request for military equipment from the US," the priest said.

Nacorda insisted that the Armed Forces of the Philippines is more powerful than the Abu Sayyaf.

"The Sayyafs don't have the Philippine Air Force or the Philippine Navy facilities. As to firepower, the AFP has an advantage compared with the bandits," he said.

But Brig. Gen. Glicerio Sua, chief of Task Force Comet and of the 1st Tabak Division, said US military troops "need not be physically (present) in the field."

"What we only need is their facilities. That's why troops are required to undertake training given by the US forces," he said.

Sua added that seeking US assistance was not an AFP decision but President Macapagal-Arroyo's.

The Abu Sayyaf is still holding three hostages—Americans Martin Burnham and his wife Gracia, and Filipino nurse Deborah Yap.

"We are tired of (the) government's promises," Elvira Pamaran Valbuena, Deborah's sister, said.

Valbuena said her family was "discouraged" when they learned that negotiators were sent to talk to the bandit group holding her sister.

"It's unending. If they would demand ransom, we cannot afford even five centavos," she said.

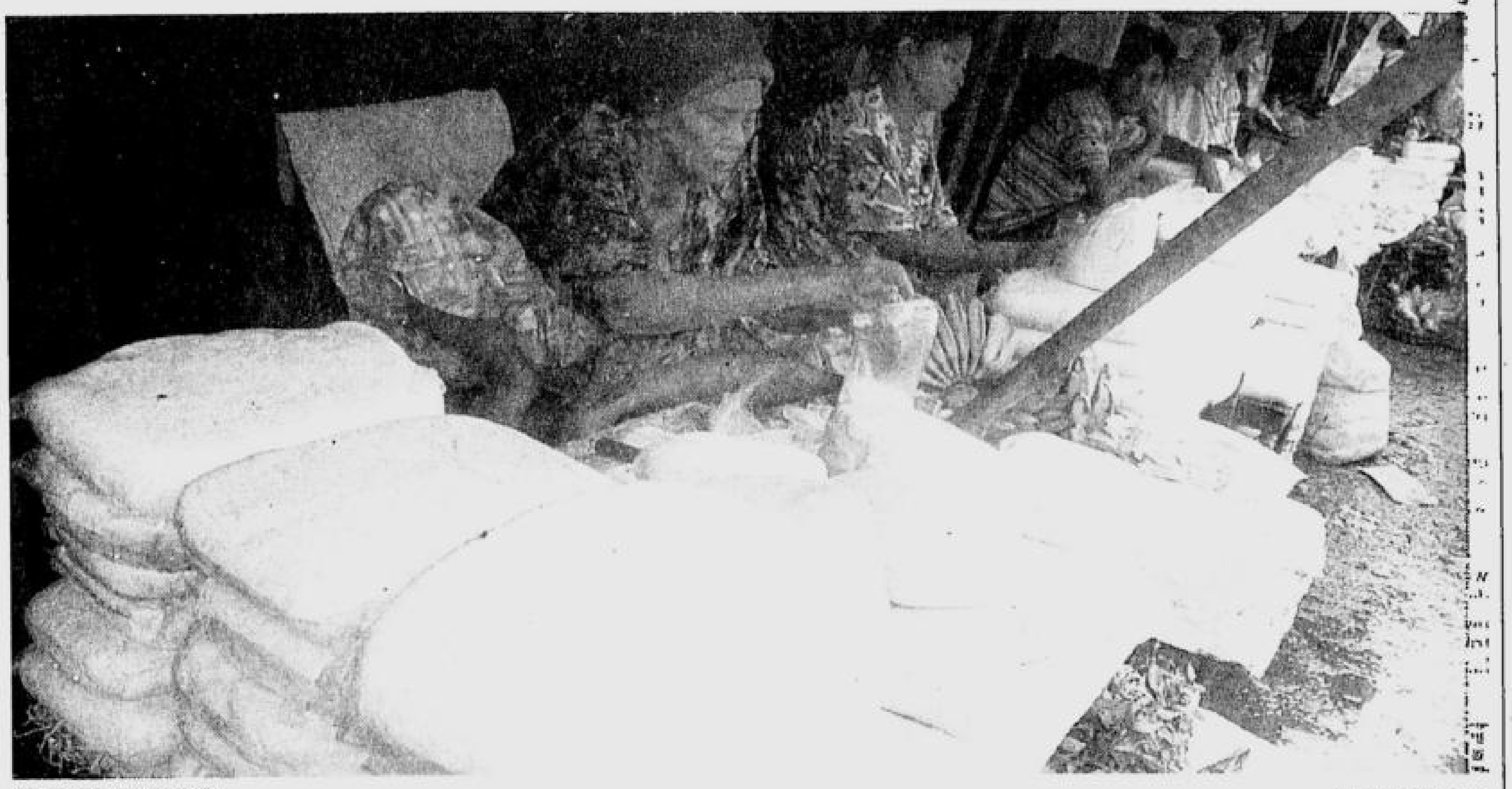
On Thursday, Father Nacorda said he received information from local negotiators that the bandits were demanding P100,000 for Yap's "board and lodging fee" while being held captive.

Valbuena also said the incident has caused irreparable damage to Yap's four children.

"Jonathan, Anthony, Mary Anne at Bon-bon (children of Yap) have lost their future. They all stopped going to school and there is no support going their way," she said.

In June last year, Social Welfare Secretary Dinky Soliman assured the children of financial support while their mother is in captivity.

"It's all in paper. It's tiring," said Valbuena. ***Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau***



STAPLE FOOD

VALHANDUMON II

Cassava, shown here being sold in plastic packets on the streets of Jolo, Sulu, has become the staple food of residents of the town.

Traders on toll hike: Fix highway first

ANGELES CITY—Business leaders here are opposing the recent decision of the Philippine National Construction Corp. (PNCC) to raise its toll rates this year.

Renato Romero, vice chair of the North Philippines Business Council, warned that businessmen and motorists here would form a united front if the PNCC continues to impose the new rates without rehabilitating the North Luzon Expressway (NLE) first.

"We are not against the increase itself. What we are opposing is the way (the PNCC) increased toll rates without rehabilitating the expressway. The PNCC should first rehabilitate the expressway before it raises the toll rates. Motorists deserve a better road," he said.

Romero said the NLE has become dangerous because of the potholes that litter the stretch of the 83.7-kilometer expressway.

He said speeding vehicles, usually traveling from 60 to 100 kilometers per hour, tend to suddenly swerve to avoid hitting the potholes.

He said new vehicles deteriorate more quickly because of the poor condition of the expressway.

The PNCC, along with the First Philippines Infrastructure Development Corp. and the EGIS Group (Transroute), earlier formed the Manila North Tollways Corp. (MNTC) to rehabilitate and expand the NLE.

The $377.5-million project reportedly includes the construction and rehabilitation of 14 interchanges, 24 bridges and 31 overpasses from the Balintawak exit to the Sta. Ines exit in Mabalacat town.

The project will be undertaken under the supplemental toll operation agreement between the government, through the Toll Regulatory Board, and the MNTC.

The Lopez Group of Companies controls the MNTC, while the PNCC has a 10-percent stake in the company.

It was reported that the MNTC has awarded a contract worth $257 million to the Leighton Holdings Ltd. of Australia, through its Leighton Contractors (Asia) Ltd., for the rehabilitation and expansion of the NLE. ***Jun Malig, PDI Central Luzon Desk***

Baguio shivers as temperature further drops

BY GOBLETH MOULIC
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Let's advertise the weather and tourists will come.

With Baguio's dipping temperature, it looks like President Macapagal-Arroyo and Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon won't have headaches promoting the city as a major tourism destination.

Just when everybody thought that the 9.6 degrees Celsius that chilled the city on Christmas Day was the coldest in decades, the mercury suddenly dipped further and hit 8.8 degrees Celsius on Friday (Jan. 4).

The temperature was Baguio's coldest since 1993 and the fourth coldest since 1961, when temperature in this mountain resort city hit an all-time low of 6.3 degrees Celsius.

And for those local and foreign tourists who failed to experience unusually cool nights during the Christmas holidays here, you have time to catch up as weather experts predict colder nights ahead until February.

"There is a possibility that we will have colder temperature than 8.8 degrees because of the cold front," said weather observer Wilson Lucando of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration station here.

Department of Tourism officials said the city's weather attracts tourists to the city.

Based on Pagasa records, residents and visitors alike have been savoring the biting cold since the long Christmas break.

The lowest temperatures recorded in the last 10 days, according to Pagasa: 10 degrees Celsius on Dec. 26; 9.8 on Dec. 27; 11.4 on Dec. 28; 11 on Dec. 29; 11.2 on Dec. 30; 13.1 on Dec. 31 and Jan. 1; 11.6 on Jan. 2; 10.2 on Jan. 3; and 8.8 on Jan.4.

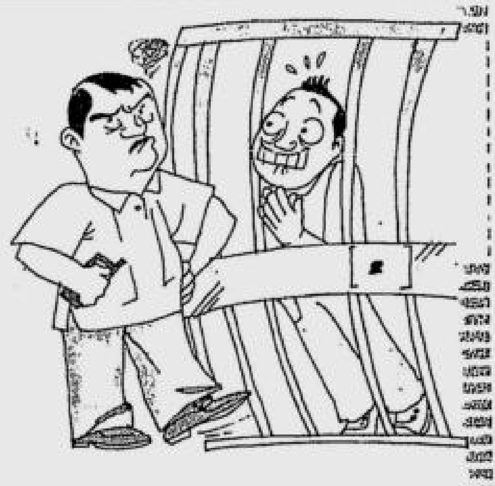
The nippy weather here has been consistently attracting prominent personalities like President Macapagal-Arroyo who offered her services for free to be Baguio's "poster girl" in a bid to bolster the reputation of her favorite holiday spot as the country's premier tourist destination.

The President made the offer at the special Sunday telecast of her weekly program "May Gloria ang Bukas Mo" on Dec. 30 which was broadcast live from the Presidential Mansion here.

Ms Macapagal spent her vacation in Baguio from Dec. 26 until the New Year with First Gentleman Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo and their children.

Most hotels in the city were fully booked at the start of the Yuletide season and the number of visitors is expected to peak up until February when the city celebrates the yearly Panagbenga or Baguio Flower Festival.

During the holidays, the Baguio police also noted that the city's traffic volume grew by 20 percent as a result of the visitor influx—an indication that more and more domestic tourists have chosen Baguio as their vacation spot.



Man who accused vice mayor of phone theft jailed

BY ALEX V. PAL
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—A 29-year-old coffee shop worker was still reeling from the pain of losing his cellular phone to thieves when on Saturday, he spotted a man whom he thought was the snatcher. He was wrong.

The "snatcher" turned out to be the vice mayor of a coastal town in Negros Oriental who came to Cebu to attend a funeral.

Now, Raul Rellesiva is languishing in jail for publicly maligning Vice Mayor Genesis Estorco of Jimalalud town, 90 kilometers north of Dumaguete.

Estorco was sipping coffee with his three companions at the Ayala Center Cebu on Saturday when spotted by Rellesiva whose 3310 Nokia phone was snatched on Dec. 26 while riding a passenger jeepney on his way to work.

Thinking that it was his lucky day, Rellesiva immediately alerted the mall security guard that he saw the man who took his cellular phone.

Estorco and his companions were surprised when they were accosted by the security guard as they were leaving the mall about 9 p.m.

They were then "invited" for "questioning" and were then brought to the coffee shop where Rellesiva was working.

"I showed (Rellesiva) my identification card and introduced myself. I even showed him my cellphone so he could see that it was not the cellphone he claimed was stolen from him," said Estorco in a telephone interview.

Even if the cellphone did not turn out to be Rellesiva's, he still insisted that Estorco was the man seated beside him in a passenger jeepney nine days earlier and who snatched his cellphone.

The vice mayor then insisted that they should go to a police station in Barangay Mabolo to settle the matter. Rellesiva agreed.

At the police station, Rellesiva stood his ground while Estorco was kept on the defensive. "Modesty aside, I don't take a jeepney whenever I am in Cebu. I was also in Jimalalud last Dec. 26 attending to various functions and preparations for the Jan. 13-15 town fiesta," he said.

It was at the police station where the incident caught the attention of several reporters. The incident was covered on a late night radio talk show over Cebu City-based radio station dySS.

Estorco's friends, who heard the broadcast, called the radio station vouching for the vice mayor's integrity. Among the callers was Jimalalud Mayor Nicon Erames.

Police investigators did not also believe Rellesiva's claims after he failed to show proof of his accusation against Estorco. They also noted that the snatching was not even reported.

Realizing that he had the wrong man, Rellesiva apologized to Estorco, but the apologies came too late. ***With a report from Kathy I. Navarro, PDI Visayas Bureau***

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Visayas and Mindanao will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms becoming widespread rains over Northeastern Mindanao. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Hi 31° Lo 18°
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Hi 22° Lo 10°
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Hi 29° Lo 16°
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Hi 30° Lo 15°
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Hi 30° Lo 18°
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Hi 28° Lo 16°
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Hi 29° Lo 23°
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Hi 29° Lo 20°
Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 29° Lo 22°
Roxas	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 29° Lo 24°
Cebu	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 30° Lo 23°
Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 30° Lo 23°
Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 30° Lo 24°
Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 32° Lo 24°
Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 29° Lo 22°
Davao	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 29° Lo 23°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research/01/07/02

Camiguin to hold anniversary rites

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—After last year's tragedy, Camiguin will have a simple celebration of its Charter Day today.

Camiguin Gov. Pedro Romualdo said the celebration will focus on giving recognition to various groups that helped residents when the province was hit by a flash flood that left more than 200 people killed.

Romualdo said there will be Mass at the Provincial Capitol, followed by a program which will be attended by mayors of the province's five towns.

"Since the weather is not friendly and we are expecting that some of those who will be given plaques of appreciation cannot join us, the least we can do is send it to them," the governor said.

Romualdo said the distribution of construction materials for 62 housing units in Mahinog town will be completed on Jan. 12. He added that those who received the materials have already begun constructing their houses.

The water system in Mahinog town, which was the worst hit by the flash flood, has been partially restored.

Romualdo said the province is still looking for other water sources.

Before tragedy struck Camiguin, the province was hailed by President Macapagal-Arroyo as a model of how local governments could promote tourism.

Camiguin was known for its Lanzones Festival, which draws hundreds of tourists every year.
Grace Cantal-Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau

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RP's new heroes subjected to abuse

(From page A1)

posed to take care of the workers, prevents them from boarding their planes in a cavalier fashion.

On Sunday, my daughter missed her flight because she didn't have aclearance from the POEA. None of the POEA staff could be found at the airport terminal building to give it to her.

Instead, she was told to get the paper the next day at an office outside the airport, pay Medicare, insurance and other fees, and have her flight rebooked.

She was told that holders of a US H1B employment visa—like herself—had to register with the POEA, regardless of whether they are contract workers or not.

She had called the Philippine consulate in San Francisco and had asked what the requirements were for Filipinos departing from the Manila airport. She had been told all she needed was pay the travel fee. Her carrier, Cathay Pacific, had told her the same thing.

At the airport, however, she was told that she had to register as a contract worker, and that she had to pay all dues every two years even though she was not a Philippine resident and the POEA had nothing to do with her landing a job in the United States.

My son who lives in Los Angeles and another daughter who stays in Geneva made the same inquiries and got similar replies.

All of them are willing to contribute to whatever Philippine agency decides whatever whimsical fee it conjures up to line its pockets, but it must let people know what it is so they are not unduly inconvenienced.

Any traveler knows just going to the airport is sheer torture. They have to go through the monstrous traffic jams where police tolerate anarchy in the streets and enforce a "no swerving" sign at a bend so they can fleece those caught in the trap.

Then they have to face the airport Gestapo. In most airports overseas, check-in counters are public places.

Not here, for all sorts of reasons, one of which is the fact that it is one place where nefarious deals take place. Relatives taking passengers there agonize at the thought of crocodiles lurking at the terminal building.

Worse, if you don't get on your scheduled flight at the end of the holiday season when most people are going back to their homes abroad, you stand the risk of not getting on any plane at all for weeks. The POEA people chose to blissfully ignore this fact.

My daughter dutifully paid the required dues to get her POEA clearance at a duty free shop a kilometer away from the airport complex—where traffic doesn't move during rush hours.

More grumblings

There were several Filipinos who were in a similar situation. They were grumbling as well but accepted meekly the standard reply—"Sorry, but it is the policy."

They had come from the provinces and obviously among the very poor who couldn't find employment opportunities in their country and have to seek them abroad.

I wondered where and how these people living on a knife's edge got the last-minute payoff for the POEA. Do the POEA people know where their money came from or how it was earned?

Memories of a Filipino couple in Khartoum toiling in the deserts of Sudan as transport dispatchers to get their children to college in Manila came to mind.

There was also that mechanic at the metro in Rome who showed me his swollen hands working overtime every single day so he can have enough money to send home.

And the Filipino humanitarian workers in battlefields in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo, in East Timor and Afghanistan.

I thought of the Filipino domestics bursting into gales of laughter in the trams and buses in Geneva after having taken on another cleaning job to add to their incomes—to odd stares from the sedate resident crowd.

On airlines, stewards and stewardesses treat these Filipinos as peasants. And the most obnoxious and insensitive of the lot, sadly, are Filipinos on airline staffs who look at them as "DH"—no matter if they are professionals in jeans and T-shirts.

There was a woman I met on a plane going home from Qatar. She had spent all her savings to work as a domestic there. She had one sorry meal a day at a house of a recruiter while waiting for weeks for her papers to be approved. She had agreed to give up her monthly wage of $100 for six months to pay for her trip.

When she arrived in Qatar, her employer found she had spots in her lungs and decided to send her home. I have not seen this woman since. I wondered if she is getting any help at all from the POEA or benefiting at all from what she paid for her Medicare insurance.

Hassle-free

In the diamond-mining town of Kenema in Sierra Leone, you buy your ticket from a man under a mango tree at the edge of the tarmac and just get on the plane to the capital Freetown and on to neighboring Conakry in Guinea. All you need to show is a visa and a declaration you don't have gems in your pocket. No hassle at all.

In Manila, there is a brand new and modernistic terminal building. The faucets there are rusting now and there is no toilet paper. The schedule of plane arrivals is scrawled on a white board. It also takes you two hours to retrieve your bags from the carousel. It makes one wonder where all the terminal fees go.

And now the government is constructing another terminal building that promises to be better than ever. One hopes when it goes on stream all the problems associated with modern travel will magically disappear.

One hopes it will also give the lie to the French saying: The more things change, the more they stay the same.

Heart baby, mom finally get US visas

(From page A1)

to tell her to go to the embassy this morning for another interview and to get her visa.

The same night, he also called the US-based Gift of Life Foundation to say everything had been sorted out for Jerden and Eden, and that they could pick up their visas this morning.

Patt also assured Andrew Topp, chair of Gift of Life District 7490, that the embassy would help them with visa applications of other Filipino program beneficiaries in the future.

Eden said Patt was very gracious and kind. He asked her to recount what happened to her on Dec. 27, when an embassy interviewer turned down her visa application and that of Jerden, although she had documents proving Jerden had a sponsored heart surgery at the Montefiore Medical Center in New York.

Eden said she gave Patt the numbers of the hospital and the foundation.

He later called her back to tell her to bring all her documents again to the US Embassy for a 7:30 a.m. appointment today.

Erica Topp, Andrew Topp's 17-year-old daughter and executive secretary of the Gift of Life district, also e-mailed Eden the good news.

"The chief visa officer, Mr. Stuart Patt, called us this morning, and everything has been sorted out. You and Jerden will receive your visas on Monday morning when you get there. They have been approved," Erica wrote.

Eden's despair turned to joy upon hearing the good news.

"Thank you so much. We are so happy. We did not know that it would turn out this way," she told the INQUIRER in a phone interview from Olongapo.

She extended her thanks to everyone who helped her.

"Your article indeed served as an eye opener to others. Most importantly, it opened the ears of the people at the embassy," she wrote in an e-mail yesterday.

E-mail campaign

After the article came out Saturday, newspaper readers wrote to Bo Eric Sandberg, founder of the Sweden-based BOES.org—the Internet lifeline where the first plea for free heart surgery for Jerden and for 2-year-old Dajed Montojo was heard. Readers offered to join an e-mail campaign to force the US Embassy to grant visas to Jerden and her mother.

The Philippine ambassador to Washington, Albert del Rosario, also offered to make representations with the embassy.

"Your article from yesterday regarding the denial of Jerden's visa did the trick not only for her but for all the incoming Filipino children!" Topp wrote in an e-mail over the weekend.

He said Patt did call him up.

"He was very gracious and understanding and would like to help us out with future visa applications. This should make the process easier for all in the future," he said.

Two more Filipino children are scheduled for heart surgery through the Gift of Life program. They are 9-month-old Joshua Perez from Antipolo City, and 3-year-old John Morados from Zamboanga City.

Joshua and his mother Almira were granted single-entry visas valid for a year. Joshua is scheduled for operation on Jan. 15. Northwest Airlines has given them free round-trip tickets.

Jennifer Montojo, mother of Dajed, the first beneficiary of the Gift of Life program, said she hoped that Northwest Airlines could also accommodate Jerden and Eden Sampang through their Kid Care program, so that they could also get free plane tickets, or at least enjoy a discount on their fare.

Eden, 31, Jerden's widowed mother, is a government employee, having served at the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority for the last 10 years. She uses her salary to support two daughters.

Her late husband, Jerry, contracted rheumatic heart disease when he was just a kid and died last year because of congestive heart failure. He underwent an operation when he was just 11 for mitral valve replacement; he was supposed to undergo another operation in 1997 and again in 1999.

But because he had no money to finance the surgery, he had to wait for five years for a charity operation. He died a month before the scheduled surgery.

"I am worried and afraid that Jerden might suffer the same fate as her father. I am doing everything I can to prevent this from happening, that's I why I tried searching the Internet for kind-hearted individuals or institutions that can help me with my daughter's predicament," Eden said in her first letter to action@boes.org, sent on Sept. 5.

After their applications were denied, she cried and cried, recalled Jennifer Montojo, who had been advising Eden over the phone.

An organization of law students urged the government yesterday to lodge a firm and strong diplomatic protest with the American government for the shabby treatment by US consuls of Filipinos applying for a US visa.

Leopoldo Zerrudo, a spokesperson for the Kapulungan ng mga Sandigang Mag-aaral ng Batas, cited the traumatic experience of Almira Perez, who had to virtually beg an embassy official to get a visa for herself and her 8-month-old baby Joshua. *With a report from Nelson Flores*

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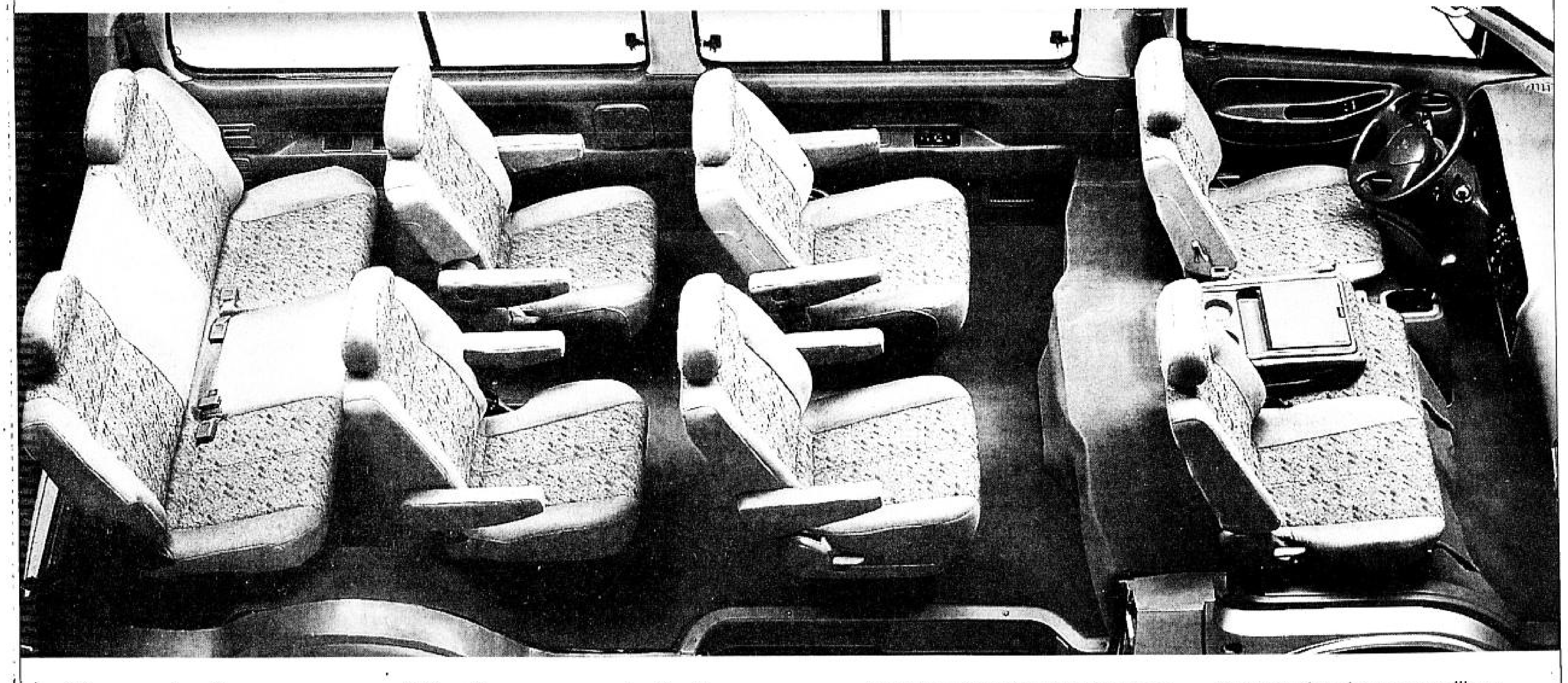

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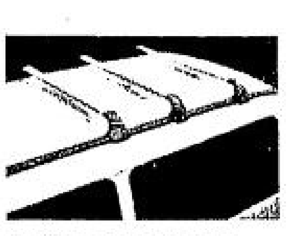

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Baron . . .

(From page A1)

Contrary to YOU officials' claims, Saycon insisted that Cervantes had been a member of the group and even served as their "front man" in the moves to oust then impeached President Joseph Estrada in 2000.

"Even (Navy Capt. Proceso) Maligalig had admitted that they used Bong when they could not come out in the open to fight Estrada. It was Bong who spoke out against Estrada while they stood below ground since they were in the active service," he said.

"He was valuable to the group. They should not forget the value of his sacrifice when he was still alive."

Saycon also defended Cervantes' exposé of the alleged coup plot from criticisms. "That's not politics. (He had to do that because) there's threat to the well-being of the State," Saycon said.

But at the same time, Saycon called members of the YOU to a dialogue to thresh out the group's internal problems.

"Let's talk. Let's do some soul-searching. This culture of violence has to change. Otherwise, it will be hard to form the coalition again," he said, referring to the alliance between civil society groups and rightist military groups during the campaign to oust Estrada.

Saycon called on other people to stop maligning Cervantes, saying he couldn't defend himself anymore.

The Copa official disputed allegations that Cervantes had been engaged in extortion. "He never asked any cent from us each time he gave us intelligence report."

The necrological services turned out to be a reunion of sorts for some members of the civil society that helped oust Estrada and exposed Sen. Panfilo Lacson's alleged links to criminal syndicates.

Seen during the rites were former Tarlac Rep. Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, De Vera, Jimenez, businessman Danny Devnani and Mary "Rosebud" Ong.

Golez and Chief Supt. Romeo Maganto, who is on floating status, were also present.

"Baron touched so many lives; most of them were those who joined the struggle against the Erap administration. Now they're discovering the true life of Baron," Saycon said.

CAROL Cervantes grieves over the body of her son Baron during burial rites on Sunday at the Manila Memorial Park in Parañaque City. JESS YUSON

Patriot

"He (Cervantes) may not have been given honors by the Philippine Army but I think the greatest honor we can give him is that we recognize his death as a patriot, as one who died for his country," Saycon said.

Saycon added that Cervantes "gave his life for his country. We won't forget him and his death."

During the services, Jimenez said the public should remember Cervantes for his role in Edsa II, the military-backed people's revolt that led to the ouster of Estrada, more than anything else.

"Let us remember him as one of those who fought with us against Estrada," he said.

Golez also paid tribute to Cervantes for pursuing a cause "admired by many but questioned by some. He had a cause and harnessed all his talents to pursue this cause," he said.

"I would never forget Cervantes for refusing to accept the post of a consultant because he said 'this would affect his objectivity.' But I appealed to him," he added.

It was the first time that Golez confirmed that Cervantes had served as his consultant.

Cervantes is survived by his father Roque, mother Carolina, younger brothers, Lloyd, Nick and Jojo, and sister Haydee.

Burial

Denied of military honors, Cervantes yesterday got a hero's tribute from his family, friends and from cause-oriented groups at his burial at the Manila Memorial Park.

There was no gun salute accorded to military men, but the strong show of support for the slain Army officer honored whatever contributions he had given to his country.

"For us he was a hero," Cervantes' brother Nick told the INQUIRER. "We're not begging for military honors. We know that he had made his country proud and history will judge him."

The Armed Forces had refused to give Cervantes military honors because he was dismissed twice from the service for going Awol (absent without official leave).

A Philippine flag was placed on top of his coffin. It came not from the military but from his family and friends.

Some 100 people, including kibitzers and media men, came to the burial.

"We really wanted the burial to be simple and as much as possible private," Nick said. "We wanted to give Baron a moment of peace especially in the middle of all these controversies."

Groups such as Copa, VACC and the Equal Justice for All Movement came and vowed to help seek justice for Cervantes.

On hand to pay their last respects were Golez, Tricie Sison and Saycon of Copa, De Vera of E-Just, Lauro Vizconde and Jimenez of the VACC, and Mary "Rosebud" Ong.

Most of Cervantes' friends wore white. Conspicuously missing from the burial were members of YOU and RAM.

Cervantes' 60-year-old mother Carol sobbed when the coffin was opened to allow his family to see him for the last time. "I love you, my son," the mother said, weeping.

Cervantes' father, who had maintained a stone-face all throughout the wake, nearly fainted as the coffin was lowered into the ground. *With a report from Alcuin Papa*

YOU chair says Gloria 'supporters' behind slay

(From page A1)

The "God Save the Queen" destabilization plot that Cardeño referred to was hatched in late 1986, barely a year after the Edsa People Power Revolution swept Aquino to the presidency.

Malacañang then pointed to the rebellious Reform the Armed Forces Movement. RAM countered that the plot was a concoction of people in the Palace.

The tense period saw, among others, the relief of then Defense Secretary Juan Ponce Enrile, who was considered "godfather" of the RAM, and then Executive Secretary Joker Arroyo, who was painted by his rightist detractors as one of the "leftists" in the Aquino administration.

It was during this same period when militant labor leader Rolando "Ka Lando" Olalia and his driver Leonor Alay-ay were murdered.

"It's the same formula for Cory and Gloria," Cardeño said.

But ironically Cardeño was identified by Cervantes in a report he submitted to Pastor "Boy" Saycon of the Council on Philippine Affairs (Copa) on Dec. 31, the day Cervantes was killed, as one of the six officers plotting a coup against the Macapagal administration last Christmas.

The other five are retired Gen. Edgardo Abenina, Supt. Diosdado Valeroso, Navy Capt. Proceso Maligalig, Col. Romeo Lim and Lt. Senior Grade Donn Anthony Miraflor.

Cardeño was named by a supposed associate of Cervantes as the one who had the strongest motive to order the killing of Cervantes because the slain former Army officer knew about anomalies in the Land Transportation Office during the time of Abenina. Cardeño was Abenina's chief executive assistant.

He knew too much

Cardeño said Cervantes, the self-styled spokesperson of YOU, was part of the cabal that wanted to keep the Macapagal administration unstable and that "he knew too much."

"He and his collaborators have been playing a simple scenario: that is to consistently sow threats of instability by rumormongering so that they will stand out as protectors and irreplaceable guardians of the portals of power," the YOU chair said.

Cardeño said this explained why Cervantes was singled out as the source of media reports about supposed coup and destabilization plots.

"Where were reports of coup plots coming from? From their side, not us," Cardeño said.

"Cervantes was getting ready to get away from his collaborators in clandestine political and intelligence activities and designs . . . but was too hot to be allowed to go," he said.

Fears for life

Now, Cardeño fears for his personal safety. Those behind the murder of Cervantes will not stop until someone has been framed to take the fall, according to the YOU chair.

"They will never stop until a sacrificial lamb is arrested, if not completely 'erased,' in order for them to gain public perception of 'moral and political ascendancy' over the administration and its detractors," Cardeño said.

He admitted that he has instituted security arrangements for himself "but as we all know, this is taxing."

Cardeño said Cervantes was killed "for convenience and the plot has been prepared for his 'departure' by people with media, political and financial clout."

"These are the patricians of the Macapagal administration," Cardeño said. He declined to name names.

He said these were people "on the fringes of power but are influential enough to move things, partly because there are people in government beholden to them."

Pissed off

Cardeño said that even parties close to Cervantes had noted that the slain officer himself was "pissed off" with the way things were run under the present administration.

He confirmed that Cervantes had been communicating with Valeroso, YOU co-founder, before his death because "he wanted to 're-join' the mainstream YOU."

"But how can he re-join when the YOU has not been resurrected as an organization?" Cardeño said.

The group, as explained by Lim, another co-founder, ceased to exist after former military rebels entered into a peace agreement with the government in 1995.

Cardeño noted with irony that Cervantes was killed on the same day he was supposed to meet with Saycon and hand over a report "which implicates some people he was trying to reconcile with."

He pointed out that Saycon had hastily "pointed an insinuating finger at alleged destabilizers in government that include the YOU."

Saycon had said that the sketch of the suspected gunman resembled one of the companions of Cardeño and Valeroso at the Christmas party hosted by Copa.

Cardeño said Saycon's claim "points to the apparent urgent desire (of Saycon) to divert the issue from his circle of relationships to other people."

He also noted that until Cervantes' death, he never knew that Cervantes was a consultant of National Security Adviser Roilo Golez.

He pointed out to media reports that aside from a report on a supposed destabilization plot, Cervantes delivered to Saycon a gift from Golez hours before he was killed.

Cervantes said the relationship among Golez, Cervantes and Saycon must be fully explained.

He admitted that there were anomalies in the LTO, but Abenina and his team uncovered these when they took over the agency last year. These included the proliferation of fake insurance certificates for motor vehicles and spurious driver's licenses.

Cardeño said Abenina focused on the computerization of the LTO to make transactions efficient and transparent. He said Ms Macapagal even mentioned the success of the computerization program in her State of the Nation Address.

Not Awol

In the same phone interview, Cardeño denied that he and Valeroso had been absent without official leave (Awol).

The two were transferred to Western Visayas and Zamboanga last October after they were suspected of having a hand in alleged coup plots against the Macapagal administration.

Cardeño said he reported to the Region 6 office of the Philippine National Police last December and was due to be back anytime soon.

"I'm with my family for the holidays," Cardeño said when asked about his whereabouts. *With a report from AFP*

Mail fraud artists back in business

(From page A1)

(about P22,300) in the form of a bank draft payable to the Canadian firm. The firm specifies US dollars, not Canadian currency.

"Payment will be made in two parts. $189 has to be paid immediately as a retainer's fee to start the processing of your documents. $249 should be paid after you have received a firm job offer, accepted the offer of employment and received all the necessary legal documentation, permits and other documents in order to begin working abroad. This agreement is valid for one year or until you are hired (whichever comes first) upon receipt of the retainer's fee," Croshaw wrote.

According to the company website (www.caledonian-offshore.com), Dec. 5, 2001 was its "final application deadline for 26 major oil projects now open" and that "any agreement and resumés that come in after this date, unfortunately, cannot be accepted." (A check with the website yesterday showed that the deadline had been extended to Jan. 31.)

Some of the major oil projects Caledonian claimed it could help job seekers get started on included the following:

Abana in the Gulf of Guinea in Nigeria; Alba Phase II in the North Sea, United Kingdom; Baldpate, Bayu-Undan, Cantarell and Crazy Horse oil field, all in the Gulf of Mexico; Typhoon oil fields in Mexico; Corrib gas field in Ireland;

Espedarte in Brazil; Girassol in Luanda, Angola; Hanze F2A in the Netherlands; Kashagan in Kazakhstan; Mossel Bay in South Africa; Shah Deniz in Azerbaijan; Scarab and Saffron in Egypt; Liuhua 11-1 in the South China Sea; and the Malampaya oil field in northern Palawan, Philippines.

Based on the company letterhead, the firm has offices at 107 Shorting Road, Scarborough, Ontario, Canada, and processing and service centers in Singapore, Denmark and the United States.

Not accredited

A check with the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration in Mandaluyong City, however, disclosed that Caledonian Offshore Ltd. was "neither an accredited foreign principal of the POEA nor any government-licensed recruitment agency."

Hence, according to the POEA, an attached agency of the Department of Labor and Employment, Caledonian's recruitment scheme is "contrary to existing government regulations."

Lawyer Felicitas Bay, head of the Anti-Illegal Recruitment Branch of the POEA, urged job applicants to ignore the deadlines set by firms like Caledonian Offshore in the payment of retainer's fees.

She also pointed out that payment of such fees did not guarantee work on oil rigs abroad.

Indeed, the fine print of the Caledonian Offshore contract says a potential candidate's name merely becomes "part of a computerized database" supposedly serving the offshore petroleum industry.

The contract simply says Caledonian "will do a complete evaluation of your work experience, skills, etc. to find you a suitable position onboard an oil platform. When you receive a job, we will handle all written and verbal negotiations with your potential employers. As soon as the job offer is confirmed, Caledonian Offshore Ltd. will provide you with the necessary instructions in order to comply with the formalities required by the labor laws of the pertinent country."

The Caledonian contract also assures applicants of its "full cooperation and assistance in finding you a suitable job aboard an offshore oil platform."

Reyes, 36, a former contract worker in a door and window factory in Taiwan, described the job offer as "*parang hulog ng langit* (a gift from heaven)." But "it's too good to be true," he said.

He admitted he "initially considered giving it a try. Imagine, a daily wage of more than P20,000! What if the job offer is legitimate?"

Responding to queries from job seekers, the POEA early this month sought "investigative assistance" from both the Canadian and US embassies, as well as the National Bureau of Investigation, to look into the alleged mail-fraud scheme of Caledonian Offshore and American Offshore Corp., another foreign recruitment firm.

On Dec. 5, Director Viveca Catalig of the POEA licensing and regulation office asked Postmaster General Nicasio Rodriguez Jr. to help the agency in its probe.

The POEA's Regional Center for Mindanao went one step further: it requested the Philippine Postal Corp. to stop delivering mail coming from the alleged nonexistent foreign firms.

Those offered job opportunities by Caledonian Offshore and American Offshore were "wondering how those firms were able to get their names and home addresses," said Francis Domingo, head of the POEA's Mindanao Regional Center, based in Davao City.

Another company

American Offshore has offices at the following addresses: 5090 Richmond Ave., Houston, Texas; 123 SE 3rd Ave., No. 342, Miami, Florida; and 599 B. Yonge St., Suite 283, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Like Caledonian Offshore, American Offshore is not accredited by the POEA. The US company also offers employment opportunities through mail and requires applicants to pay a retainer's fee of $139.

In a Sept. 25 letter to Tricia Consolacion Abrasado of Kidapawan City, North Cotabato, the Miami office of American Offshore claimed it had approved her bio-data form and that she had been "accepted for the position of information clerk."

But the US firm did not say which oil exploration company was hiring her. Instead, it said that "due to the large amount of qualified applicants and the limited number of positions, a $139 retainer's fee is required to show your true commitment and intent on working offshore as an information clerk."

"The position approved for you will only be held for 60 days from the date of this letter. It is extremely important that you fulfill (four) requirements (including a photocopy of her passport showing her name and the document's number as well as the retainer's fee) as soon as possible," American Offshore told Abrasado.

Instead of doing what she was told, Abrasado checked with the Philippine Embassy in Washington, DC, on the recruitment activities of the US firm.

On Nov. 14, labor attaché Helen Custodio advised Abrasado to "desist from further dealings or sending any money to AOC."

"The labor office checked with the US telephone company Verizon for such a company in their listing. We were informed that the closest they could find was a company named Offshore Business News & Research with the same address. When we called up the telephone number given by Verizon, a certain David Marchant (Offshore Business owner) informed us that 13 other people have called up to inquire about AOC," wrote Custodio.

"The address on American Offshore's letterhead is a mailbox address and the No. 342 is actually a post office box and not an office suite number," Custodio wrote.

An inquiry made with the Florida Division of Corporations website disclosed that "the listed owner and only incorporator of American Offshore Corp. is a certain Rommy Kriplani."

"A search in the same database reveals that Mr. Kriplani has been an officer/director of four Florida corporations that were formed one year and struck off the next. American Offshore Corp. was struck off the corporate register last month and currently does not even exist legally as a corporation," Custodio said.

Recurring problem

Like Bay, Evelia Durato, head of the Cebu City-based POEA Regional Center for the Visayas, called the recruitment-by-mail scheme a "recurring problem" of the agency.

"We encountered the same problem during the early 1990s. Some job seekers fell prey to false promises of recruitment companies (involved in the mail fraud scheme)," she recalled.

In May 1994, for example, the POEA received queries from job applicants who were reportedly offered jobs on luxury cruise ships through mail by World Cruise Corp., a Panama City-based firm.

World Cruise was not a government-accredited recruitment firm, prompting the POEA to warn the public against its recruitment activities.

Then POEA Administrator Felicisimo Joson asked the Panamanian Embassy in Manila for "information on the legal existence or corporate profile" of the company.

A copy of a letter sent to job seekers by T. Alexis Cordoba, who introduced himself as WCC president, offered recruits "tax-free income, ranging from $1,000 to $3,000 per month (then equivalent to P25,000 to P75,000), plus additional bonuses on board cruise ships in the Caribbean, Mediterranean and the Pacific."

"World Cruise Corp.'s Cruise Ship Employment Program is a great opportunity for people who are serious about wanting to work successfully on a cruise ship," Cordoba had written.

Because "goals and objectives are never achieved by dreaming," Cordoba urged job seekers to "be daring, participate and let us help you."

Cordoba made the pitch in 1994. Seven years later and well aware that illegal recruitment remains a thriving business in developing countries like the Philippines, firms like Caledonian Offshore and American Offshore are making the same claims again. *(To be continued tomorrow.)*

'Earn as much as $100,000 a year!'

IN HIS form letter, Caledonian Offshore president Philip M. Croshaw claimed at least 41 positions were available on offshore platforms in the North Sea in Europe and other foreign oil fields, including Malampaya in the Philippines.

"Service workers earn approximately $290-$320 a day. A drill deck worker earns $320-$355 daily, or $43,000-$47,500 a year. If you are promoted to a driller, then your salary would be $405-$430 per day, or $58,000 a year. If you climb the career ladder even higher to a tool pusher or drill leader, your gross salary would then be $75,000 to $100,000 a year," Croshaw claimed.

And if this is not good enough, the Caledonian Offshore website (www.caledonianoffshore.com) made an additional claim: the salaries in oil and gas exploration projects were also tax-free.

Enclosed in the mail from Caledonian Offshore was an "agreement" between the firm and any "potential candidate for employment onboard an offshore oil platform."

To be able to work on an oil platform, the agreement read, "you have to be a minimum of 18 years old." The website, however, specified that job applicants should be between 20 and 40 years old.

"Normally, the contract period is at least one year and includes agreements regarding travel allowances as well as board and lodging. Every year, you are entitled to one-month vacation with a paid roundtrip plane ticket."

The website noted that the offshore oil industry allows "people with minimum scholarity and no previous experience to grow and develop a profitable career."

"Caledonian Offshore's unique recruitment service has already helped hundreds of men and women around the world to find well-paid oil jobs! . . . We put you in the right place at the right time," it added. *J. Esplanada*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

RP team tryouts resume today

JACOBS

By June Navarro

THE SECOND phase of the tryouts for the national team to the Asian Games will resume today even as head coach Ron Jacobs remains at the intensive care unit of the St. Luke's Medical Center.

San Miguel Beer coach Jong Uichico will preside over the tryouts starting 9 a.m. at the Moro Lorenzo Sports Complex inside the Ateneo campus.

A total of 37 aspirants from the PBA, MBA, PBL and NCAA are expected to troop to the tryouts with Purefoods coach Eric Altamirano and Allan Caidic of Barangay Ginebra lending their expertise.

As this developed, Jacobs is still recovering from a stroke he suffered more than two weeks ago.

A source said Jacobs was responding to stimulus through eyebrow and hand gestures but remains in deep slumber. According to the source, a third CT scan on Jacobs last Saturday revealed that the 59-year-old San Miguel basketball consultant's brain has subside.

The source added Jacobs was heavily sedated with antibiotics to avoid fever and the occurrence of bedsores.

The PBA gave Jacobs until Jan. 25 to form the two teams, which will compete in the first conference but Uichico hopes that the deadline will be extended.

MBA hotshots Rommel Adducul, Chris Clay, Rafi Reavis, Jeffrey Flowers, Chris Calaguio, Omanzie Rodriguez and John Ferriols have been picked to the pool along with the PBL's Renren Ritualo, Mike Cortez, Jimmy Alapag and Rob Johnson.

Sunday Salvacion, a 6-foot-3 long-distance sniper from the College of St. Benilde in the NCAA, surprisingly made the roster that will mix it up in the tryouts starting 9 a.m. at the Moro Lorenzo Sports Center inside the sprawling Ateneo campus.

Other PBA players released by their respective teams were Dondon Hontiveros and Olsen Racela of San Miguel, Patrick Fran of Talk N Text, Boyet Fernandez of Purefoods, Ginebra's EJ Feihl, Pop Cola's Johnny Abarrientos, Michael Hrabak of Shell and Alaska's John Arigo.

The 17 PBA players earlier named to the pool were Ali Peek and Kenneth Duremdes of Alaska, Ginebra's Eric Menk, Danny Ildefonso and Danny Seigle of San Miguel, Dennis Espino and Marlou Aquino of Sta. Lucia, Pop Cola's Edward Juinio and Rudy Hatfield;

Shell's Chris Jackson, Davonn Harp and Mick Pennisi of Red Bull, Jeffrey Cariaso of FedEx, Don Camaso and Asi Taulava of Talk N Text and Noy Castillo and Andy Seigle of Purefoods.

Lakers vs Raptors

SOLAR Entertainment will telecast today's (Monday, Jan. 7) blockbuster NBA game between the defending champion Los Angeles Lakers and the Toronto Raptors live at 9 a.m. (with a replay at 8 p.m.) on the Solar cable channel, Skycable-24 and Homecable-17. This is the second and final meeting between the two teams this season.

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Jordan: It will be different in Chicago

WASHINGTON—Michael Jordan beat the Chicago Bulls and scored his 30,000th point on the same night. Those were special moments, yes, but a bigger one is coming in less than two weeks.

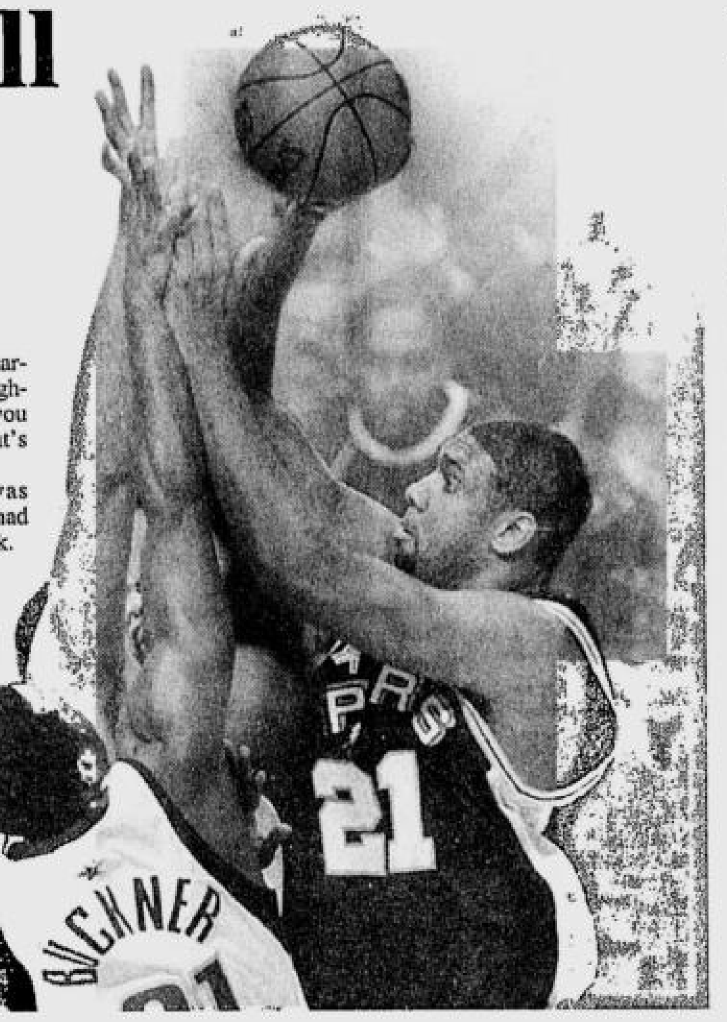
"I imagine it will be a little different in Chicago," Jordan said, "playing in front of the fans that I've played in front of for years."

On Jan. 19, the Wizards go to Chicago, where Jordan still lives and where his statue outside the United Center is a tourist attraction. The game will be one of the most-anticipated all season, but it won't be easy to match the drama of the Wizards' 89-83 victory over the visiting Bulls on Friday night.

"Thirty-thousand points is a lot," said Jordan, who became the fourth NBA player to reach the mark when he made a couple of free throws in the second quarter. "That was more or less the highlight of the game, but any time you can beat your former team, that's always a plus, too."

The first plot twist was Jordan's sinus infection, which had been sapping his energy all week. He started slow, then dominated the second quarter by scoring 19 of the Wizards' 25 points. His good friend, Ron Artest, violently punched the scorer's table three times when he realized he had committed the foul that would allow Jordan to reach 30,000.

"I guess he got some on other people like (Larry) Bird and everybody else, but it happened on me," Artest said. "I fouled him and he got his 30,000. *AP*



NBA ACTION
Tim Duncan of San Antonio (right) shoots against Greg Buckner of Dallas during their NBA game Saturday night. The Spurs won, 105-103. Complete results: Minnesota 112, Atlanta 96; Boston 90, New York 81; New Jersey 89, Charlotte 80; Detroit 101, Cleveland 91; Orlando 118, Golden State 109; Utah 113, Chicago 111, OT; Indiana 81, Houston 79; San Antonio 105, Dallas 103; Sacramento 118, Phoenix 112; Portland 96, Philadelphia 88; L.A. Clippers 86, Milwaukee 83. AP

Rodman arrested

NEWPORT BEACH, California—Dennis Rodman was arrested early Saturday on suspicion of obstructing and delaying officers investigating a possible code violation at his seaside restaurant.

The former NBA player was taken into custody at 3:15 a.m. after refusing to let police officers enter the restaurant.

Newport Beach police Sgt. Neal Harvey said Rodman violated a Business and Profession Code, which restricts the hours of alcohol beverage service after 2 a.m., when he stayed inside the restaurant past that hour. *AP*

Baguio to host Corporate Cup

VISITING golfers from the United States, Japan, Hawaii and Australia will join local entries when the 14th Corporate Cup golf tournament is held on Feb. 12-14 at the Club John Hay in Baguio City.

The Corporate Cup secretariat has already received confirmations of entries from the four countries who have expressed excitement over the new allure of John Hay which just opened its Manor and several popular food outlets.

Lawyer Cecil Hechanova of the organizing committee said that only the first 180 players to sign up will be accepted on a first come-first served basis, owing to the expected surge in registration.

The Fil-Estate Group of Companies and College Assurance Plan head the early batch of sponsors supporting the tourney which is returning to John Hay after two years.

"A golfing holiday capped by a Valentine's Day celebration, that's what will make this year's Corporate Cup different especially for couples who'll go up to Baguio for the event," said Hechanova.

Format is both team and individual. Each team is allowed a team of five players with the best four counting each day.

Derby entries submission on

TODAY (Monday, Jan. 7) is the deadline for the submission of entries to the much-awaited 3rd Mandaluyong International 9-Cock Derby at Mandaluyong Coliseum.

Sponsors of the event are Sagupaan Super Feeds and Washout Shampoo.

Entries will be accepted at the Mandaluyong Coliseum from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. Participants may contact 531-4003, 531-4005, 534-4110 and 535-2341 for other inquiries.

The major event, to be hosted by businessman-sportsman Vic Yu, will blast off at 4 p.m. tomorrow (Tuesday, Jan. 8) featuring 75 fights in the elimination round (2-cock).

On Thursday is the semifinal round (3-cock) while the championship round fires off on Saturday (4-cock).

Galleros de Manila meet gets going

COCKFIGHTING titans will collide anew today in the 4-Cock Galleros de Manila 2nd Derby at the Roligon Mega Cockpit in Parañaque City.

Hosted by pit-fighting stalwarts William Go, Butchoy Ang, lawyer Joey Mendoza, Bobby de Rosario, Dr. Jovy Obligane, Jr. and ASF, this second offering of the Galleros de Manila, an organization of cockerbreeders founded for the sole enjoyment of cockfighting, has a cash prize of P400,000 for an entry fee of P8,800 which must be paid upon submission of weights.

For inquiries and cockhouse reservation, call Tiling or Fred at 83316-38 or 833-22-75.

Athletes worthy of praise

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

ONE athlete who is truly deserving of emulation is Arnold Balais, the 32-year-old amputee who will be honored by the Philippine Sportswriters Association during its annual awards night this Friday at the Holiday Inn Manila.

Balais will be given the PSA citation as the "Most Outstanding athlete with Disability" for winning the gold in the 200-meter freestyle swimming event in a new Far East and south Pacific Games record of 2:45.06 and the bronze medals in five other events during the First ASEAN Paralympic Games held in Malaysia last Oct. 23-20. He will plane in from Cebu City, courtesy of Mike Barredo, president of the Philippine Sports Association of the Differently Abled (Philspada), to receive the awards together with the other PSA awardees led by world billiards champion Efren "Bata" Reyes and the world-class golfer Dorothy Joy Delasin.

In the case of Balais, members of Congress, particularly sportsminded Representatives. Jaime Lopez and Monico Puentevella and Senators Robert Jaworski and Vicente Sotto III, who are both national players themselves, should consider filing a bill that would reward medal winners of the Paralympic Games similar to Republic Act 9064 which was recently signed into law by President Macapagal-Arroyo. Known as the "Sport Benefits and Incentives Act of 2001," RA 9064 grants hefty rewards to Olympic and Asian Games medal winners but not to medal winners of the Paralympics. This should note be the case. The country's differently abled persons or those athletes with disability train just as hard and serious as normal athletes in their quest for gold and glory and deserved to be rewarded for the sake of equity and fairness.

SPORTSWATCH

Verplank, Perry up

KAPALUA, Hawaii—Scott Verplank carded a three-under-par 70 that included an eagle at the par-five 18th to grab a share of the third round lead with Kenny Perry at a windswept Mercedes Championships on Saturday. Perry, who was the joint-leader at the end of the second round with David Toms, finished with a 71. Verplank and Perry are both at 13-under 206. World number one Tiger Woods shot a one-over par 74 to finish the third round 10 shots off the pace with a three-under 216 and 16th place. Woods won the tournament in 2000. *AFP*

Present for Ali

LOS ANGELES—Muhammad Ali will get at least one of his presents early when the county Board of Supervisors issues him a proclamation Tuesday noting his 60th birthday. "It's a perfect time for the county to honor him, not only for what he has accomplished but for the person he is," Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke said. The boxing great, who turns 60 on Jan. 17, is riding a new wave of public attention with the release of the movie "Ali," starring Will Smith. *AP*

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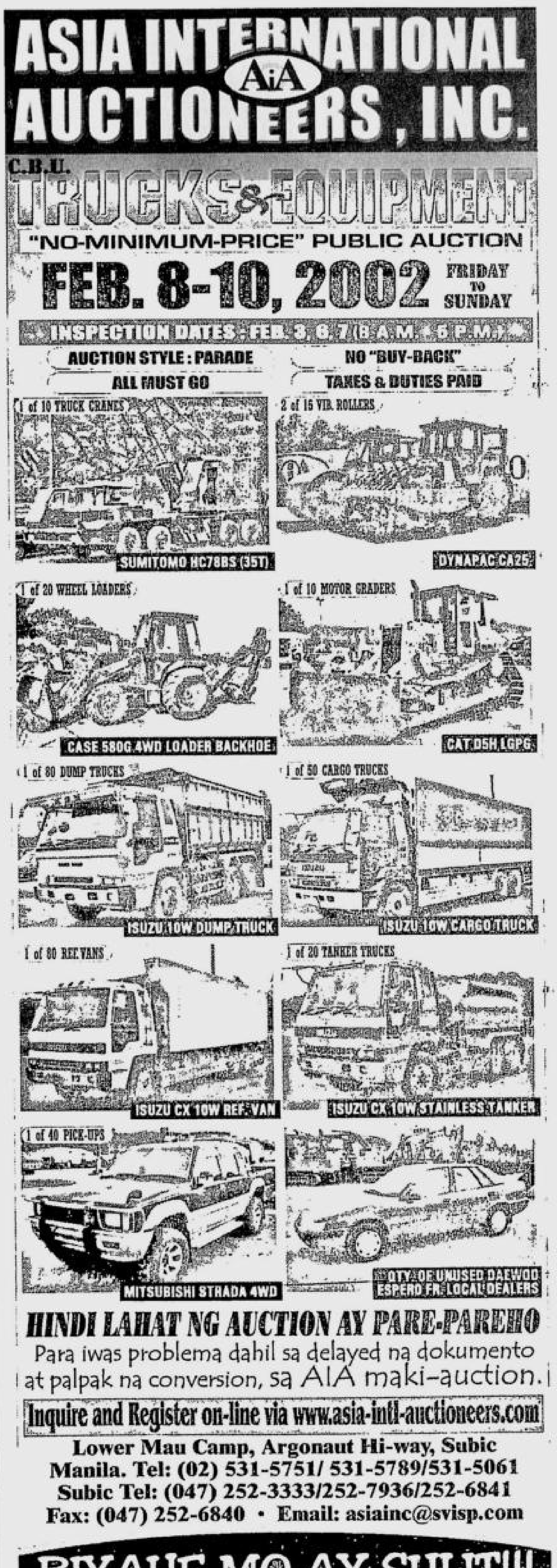

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SPORTS

AL S. MENDOZA, Editor EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA, Assistant Editor

PSA AWARDS

PSC, oil firms to get citations

THE PHILIPPINE Sports Commission, which kept in motion a nationwide grassroots development program, and three oil giants and a soft drink company which have given Philippine sports a shot in the arm will receive special citations from the Philippine Sportswriters Association during the PSA Annual Awards Jan. 11 at the Holiday Inn.

Despite the financial crunch that slowed down sports, the PSC launched its major projects on the grassroots level, beginning with the Batang Pinoy in January, Palaro Para sa Batang Lansangan in June, the first Mindanao games in November and again the Batang Pinoy in December.

The PSC also embarked on a special program for indigenous communities like the National Special Olympics in Baguio in March.

In line with efforts to develop the next generation of sports heroes, the PSC staged the third Summer Youth Training Camp where over 200 medalists and outstanding performers of the Batang Pinoy and Millennium Palarong Pambansa underwent intensive training, sports leadership, values education and psychomotor skills development.

Three giant oil firms which gave major sports a big boost with their year-long sponsorship are Caltex Philippines, Petron Corporation and Pilipinas Shell.

They join co-athletes of the year Dorothy Joy Delasin of professional golf and Efren "Bata" Reyes of billiards, eight major awardees and 38 outstanding sportsmen in various sports disciplines in the Awards Night which will be attended by sports leaders, members of sports media and select members of the corporate community.

The Awards Night is sponsored by Photokina Marketing with support from the PSC, Philippine Airlines, Hermie Esguerra and AMF Puyat.

Caltex Philippines bankrolled the preparation and foreign participation of the national pool of boxing in various international tournaments as part of a three-year agreement with the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines to develop Filipino boxers into champions in the Southeast Asian Games, Asian Games or Olympics.

Petron Corporation was behind the intensive training and foreign exposure of the Philippine taekwondo team which won two gold medals in the last Southeast Asian Games.

Pilipinas Shell organized the national Shell Active Chess which drew over 20,000 young schoolers from 14 regions as part of its social commitment to develop young aspirants into strong national chess players.

The annual grassroots chess program of Shell has produced national masters and champions in national junior and age group chess tournaments as well as international competitions.

The Philippine Football Federation continued to sustain an aggressive program designed to generate widespread interest in football among the youth and provide avenues, such as age-group tournaments and clinics, to develop their skills.

The Coke Go-For-Goal is a mass-based program that has been staged successfully in the provinces, with city and provincial tournaments culminating in regional and eventually the national championships.

Biagan tops triathlon

NATIONAL team member Abet Biagan pocketed his second sprint title, posting his best time so far in the maiden offering of the Triathlon Association of the Philippines—the year 2002 Sprint Triathlon Open— yesterday at the Ayala Alabang Village, Muntinlupa City.

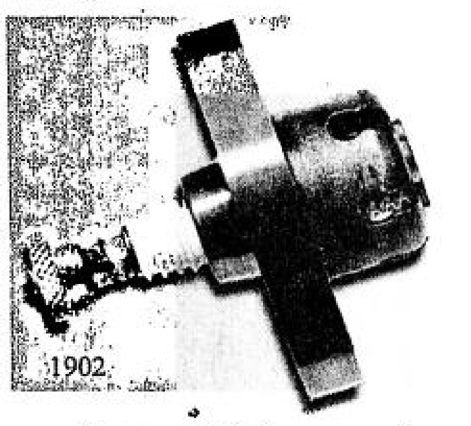
The 25-year-old Cebuano, who is also the overall champion of the National Age Group Triathlon Series 2001, outkicked former national champion and currently national coach Abelardo Alon-Alon in the last four-kilometer run leg en route to a convincing victory.

Biagan timed 1:15:29, almost four seconds better than his clocking in the Sprint Triathlon race.

Biagan, who will also represent the country in the Asian Triathlon Championship to be held in China in September, came in third in the 750-meter swim leg then endured a wheel-to-wheel sprint with Peter Gonzales, before pouring it all in the last stage of the race sponsored by Speedo, Asia Pacific Insulation and Philippine Sports Commission, hosted by the Ayala Alabang Village Association.

In the distaff side, Junior Elite champion Katherine Kaye Lopez of the University of the Philippines added another feather in her cap by capturing the women's title, crossing the finish line in her fastest time of 1:30:13.

100 years of Bosch Spark Plugs -- the spark that fired the development of the automobile


1902

It is now a hundred years since Bosch presented the first spark plug combined with a high-tension magneto ignition system. On January 7, 1902, the company was awarded a patent for this ground-breaking development. The reliable Bosch ignition system solved what Carl Benz saw as the main problem of the early automotive technology. Together with improvements in production technology, it was the spark plug that laid the foundations for the rapid increase in automobile production over the decades that followed.

The Bosch spark plug, which has been developed and improved continuously over the decades, is a major system component which plays a key role in fuel economy, clean and efficient combustion and the reliable operation of engines and catalytic converters. Despite the tremendous increase in spark plug performance, the useful life of a Bosch park plug is now 20 to 30 times higher than the figures 90 years ago.

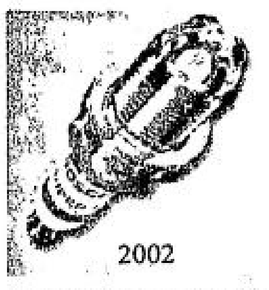
Design variants such as platinum or ytruim allow Bosch spark plugs to be used in a variety of applications. Countless different types of spark plug can also be produced by changing the type, number and shape of the electrodes.

Decades of experience and a sustained development effort in close cooperation with virtually all the major vehicle producers have made Bosch one of the world's leading OEM and aftermarket suppliers of spark plugs and the market leader in Europe. All the leading carmakers fit Bosch spark plugs as standard equipment: Bosch customers include Audi, BMW, Cadillac, Citroen, Fiat, Daimler-Chrysler, Mitsubishi, Opel, Peugeot, Porsche, Renault, Seat, Skoda, Suzuki, Toyota, Volvo and Volkswagon. The range now includes more than 20,000 different types of spark plug over the past 100 years.

In total, Bosch has produced excessively more than seven billion spark plugs. Laid end to end, they would stretch more than 350,000 kilometers, all the way to the moon.

To find out which Bosch spark plug to use not only for your car, but also for your lawnmower, power saw or boat, all you need to do is to go to the www.bosch.com web site.

Facts and Figures on the Bosch Spark Plug


2002

Annual Bosch spark plug production: More than 350 million (1902: about 300)

Material required for daily production of more than a million spark plugs: 29t of steel, 1.8t of nickel, 0.7t of copper, 15km of nickel wire, 2.5kg. of platinum and 20t of aluminum oxide for insulators

Total production since 1902: More than 7.5 billion Bosch spark plugs

Bosch spark plug types currently available: 1250 with 26 different electrode designs

Bosch spark plug types produced since 1902: More than 20,000

Smallest Bosch spark plug: 40mm long (e.g. for lawnmowers)

Largest Bosch spark plug 150mm long (e.g. for stationary gas engines)

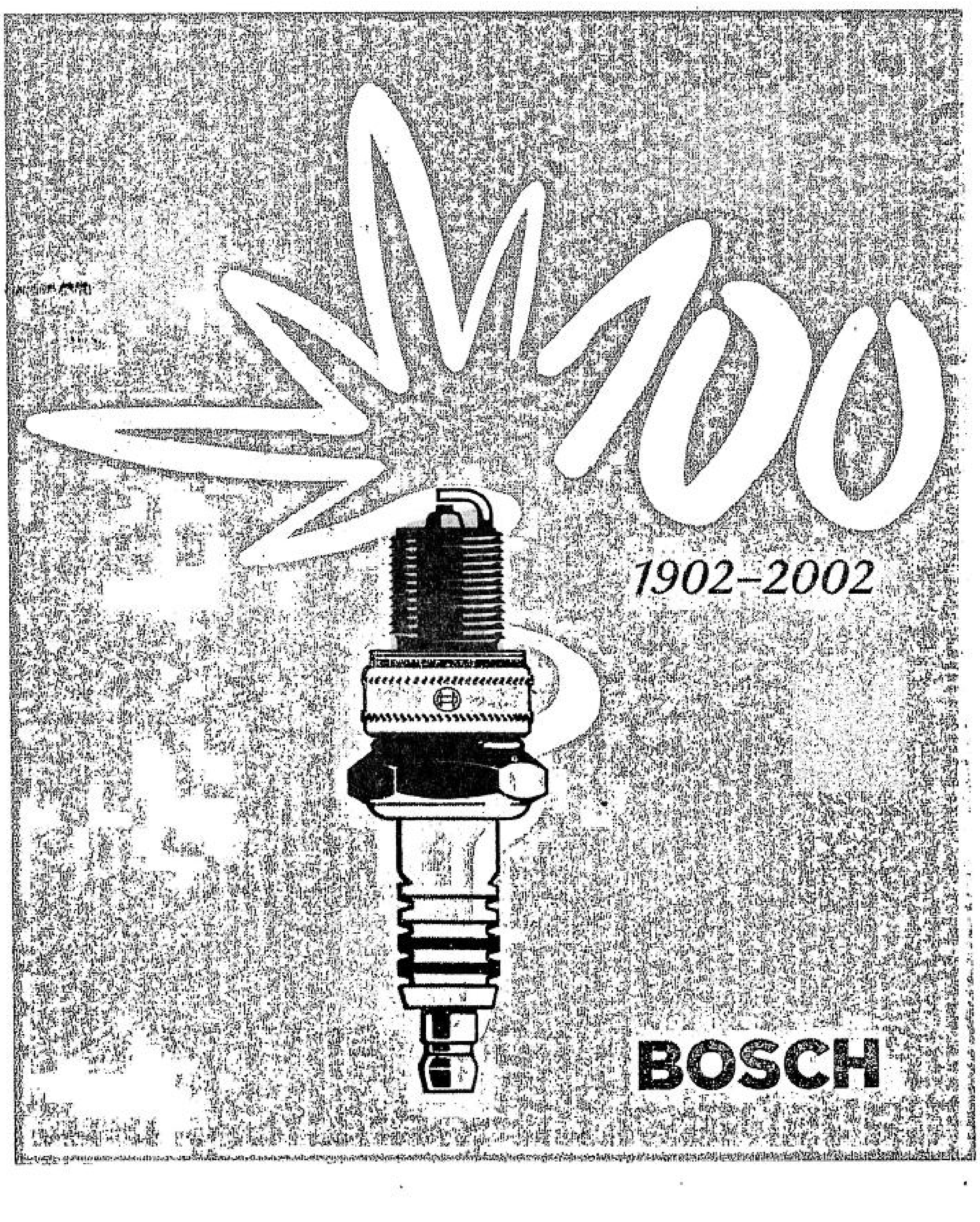
Performance of a standard Bosch spark plug: Up to 30 sparks per second or more than 20 million sparks over a useful life

Working conditions of Bosch spark plugs: Voltage up to 30,000V, temperatures up to 1,000°C, pressures up to 100 bar (equivalent to the pressure underwater at a depth of 1,000 m); hot, extremely aggressive mixture of petrol vapor, combustion products and fuel and oil residues

Bosch spark plug production plants: Bamberg (Germany), Aratu (Brazil), Engels (Russia), Naganathapura (India) and Nanjing (China)

Vehicle producers with Bosch spark plugs as original equipment: Audi, BMW, Ctiroen, Daewoo, DAF, Fiat, Lancia, Daimler - Chrysler, Holden, Mitsubishi, Nissan, Nedcar, Opel, Peugeot, Piaggio (scooters), Porsche, Renault, Rotax (small engines), Seat, Skoda, Ssang Yong, Suzuki, Toyota, Vauxhall, Volvo, VW

Applications of Bosch spark plugs: Cars, motorcycles and scooters, commercial vehicles, engines for boats and jet-skis, gardening and forestry equipment, stationary gas, emergency generator sets, water pumps and small engines



Picar son escapes from kidnappers

THE SON of businessman Reynaldo Picar, who figured in a traffic altercation that resulted in the death of ex-child actress Strawberry, is now in hiding after he was supposedly abducted by armed men last Friday, police said. Ronald Picar, son of businessman Raynaldo Picar, escaped from his abductors on the same day he was kidnapped by men who allegedly posed as National Bureau of Investigation agents, police said. *Christian V. Esguerra*

METRO

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

13 'macho' dancers nabbed

MANILA police arrested 13 male dancers, who were caught dancing naked, during a raid on the Expectations gay bar on Ramon Magsaysay Avenue in Sta. Mesa, Manila before dawn yesterday. The dancers were also found to be working without proper city permits, police said. They are facing charges of indecent exposure. *Philip C. Tubeza*

NBI finds new witness in Nida slay

BY PHILIP C. TUBEZA

AS THE family of murdered actress Nida Blanca commemorated her 66th birthday yesterday, the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) interrogated a new witness in her killing.

A taxi driver, who brought three women to Blanca's house about 2 a.m. on Nov. 7, a few hours before the actress was found dead, is the new witness, said Lawyer Ricardo Diaz, NBI Interpol chief and spokesperson of the Blanca investigation.

Diaz said the taxi driver might help solve the case "at the soonest possible time if he proves positive."

"The witness brought the three women to Blanca's house at No. 28 Nathan St. White Plains, Quezon City at a very crucial time," Diaz said.

He explained that driver brought his passengers to Blanca's home a few hours before the actress was found dead in her Nissan sedan at the Atlanta Centre building in San Juan.

Blanca was last seen alive about 5 p.m. of Nov. 6. She was leaving the Movie Television Review and Classification Board office at the Atlanta Centre building. About 15 hours later, Blanca was found dead inside her car at the sixth floor of the building's car park.

The NBI is trying to figure out what Blanca was doing, with whom she was and what happened to her during those 15 hours.

"We've been looking for him (the witness) since the first week of the investigation," Diaz said. "We caught up with him during a follow-up operation on Jan. 2."

He said the NBI began following the witness' trail after the White Plains gate logbook showed that the taxi driver brought some passengers to Blanca's house.

"We are still waiting for a new development in this new twist," Diaz added.

He said the bureau is trying its best to solve Blanca's killing with nine teams following up the murder case.

"Speed is important but if we are made to choose between speed and accuracy, we're choosing speed," he said.

Blanca's family went to her grave at the Loyola Memorial Cemetery in Marikina to mark her birthday yesterday.

"We should not be weary in our search," said NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco. "The bureau is not facing a blank wall. It is making progress in this case.

"We have already gathered some circumstantial evidence but they are not yet enough to file charges," he added.

But Wycoco hinted that it might take months for them to solve the case, noting that it also took the NBI months to solve the Dacer-Covito double murder.

"There are constraints in our investigation because the suspects 'cleaned' the crime scene, but we are making progress, even though slowly," Wycoco said.

JUSTICE FOR NIDA. Her daughter Khaye Torres and her mother Inocencia, their relatives, close friends and fans wear T-shirts that ask for justice for Nida and release white and blue balloons in celebration of the actress' 66th birthday yesterday. JOAN BONDOC

Bata Reyes, winner again, must be investigated

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

IT definitely was not sheer luck. Not plain magic.

Nobody has however bothered to investigate how Efren "Bata" Reyes did it.

The Magician has scored an incredible comeback from his two straight failures in the world pool championship in Cardiff, England.

There must be a sweet secret on how Bata again stunned the pool world with his string of international triumphs. He must not be made to keep it to himself.

Problem is nobody has bothered to do a little questioning to probe Bata Reyes on his sensational feats.

Now, if no one among my younger buddies in the press box goes out to buttonhole him, we'll try to rise to the challenge. We'll try to get it straight from Bata's famous mouth, blessed with that lovable toothless smile, on Friday, Jan. 11, when the Philippine Sportswriters Association again toasts him.

I have myself been intrigued. There must be something extraordinary behind the newfound form, the amazing cool and sharpness, that helped Bata recapture the imagination of pool fans all over the world.

His string of great feats was startling enough to merit him a three-page swoon feature in Time Magazine (Dec. 24 issue).

It also landed him his second Athlete of the Year award in three years.

Now, regarding that award from the PSA, allow me to run a portion of a piece for the PSA souvenir program, which had been rushed on this borrowed lap-top:

* * *

He said he would not mind if another worthy fellow had been honored as Athlete of the Year.

That's easy to believe, knowing the man's humility.

Problem is there was no other fellow worthier than Bata himself.

Another problem. Reyes, believed to be the finest pool player to wield the simple cue stick, has a penchant for downplaying his exact worth.

A much bigger problem, of course, is his horde of adoring fans. They feel sore each time Bata would fail to end up the big winner in international tournaments.

With his legend, Bata finds it hard to explain that, being merely human, he cannot be expected to win every day.

Even Bata Reyes has his off days.

* * *

Anyway, despite the attendant hassles, he seems happiest sharing his winnings with fans, mainly poor countrymen in need.

In fact, when he won a fabulous $160,000 top prize in the 2001 Tokyo 9-Ball Tournament, all he was able to take home was $90,000. (He confided this to Inquirer foreign news editor Luverne Gueco, himself a respected pool expert.) After the tax cut, a great part of the winnings was given out as *balato* for a long line of Pinoy overseas workers who had cheered him all the way to the championship.

At his home in Angeles, Pampanga, the scene is often that in the front yard of a popular political candidate close to election. There's an unending line of curious people pushing to see and touch their hero.

His wallet could run dry, his pocket emptied, but it's reported that no one goes away without getting a little something from the pool parlor spellbinder popularly called The Magician.

During his stint in the 1999 Brunei Southeast Asian Games, where he skippered the RP pool team to the championship, Bata, short of cash, was seen slipping soap, toothpaste, shampoo and towelette, hotel room rations, into the hands of visiting countrymen.

Naturally, fans and poor people who have come to adore Bata are happiest whenever their native hero comes home victorious.

The Bulletin's Dodo Catacutan hit it right when he dubbed Reyes a Robin Hood with the Cue Stick.

* * *

Of course, Bata Reyes was himself once a dreamy, penniless kid. Born to poor parents in Pampanga, Bata had to drop out from school and work in an uncle's pool parlor, Lucky 13, on Rizal Avenue in Manila, where he passed many cold nights on top of a billiard table.

It's now part of the Bata Reyes legend how be barged into the international scene by topping the 1985 Texas Nine Ball championship in his first year in the US. Shortly before announcing his presence, he was to rake in a fortune by hustling his way around several American states masked as a certain Cesar Morales, who looked more Mexican than half-Chinese or Asian.

From 1985 onward, Bata became a feared competitor in the US circuit, capturing a bagful of big championships. He also introduced an intricate native style of play, mainly a result of his days as carom king, that both puzzled and pleased plain fans and game analysts.

It was, however, not until three years ago that he became the toast of the pool world when he captured the 1999 World Pool Championship in Cardiff, England.

That great win resulted in a sports revolution at home. What followed was a pool fever that saw the emergence of a new culture, the mushrooming of pool parlors in cities and sleepy villages all over the country.

Fans, young and old, rich and poor, embraced Bata as their own. Everybody felt happily sure that the world's finest pool player, the People's Champ, lives—and smiles—in the Republic of the Philippines.

NTC urged to probe profits of cell phone firms

BY AGNES E. DONATO

BAYAN Muna Rep. Crispin Beltran yesterday called for an investigation into the operations and profits of cell phone companies Smart and Globe, following complaints from consumer groups against the pending cut on free text messages.

Beltran expressed disbelief in the claim of the two telecommunications companies they were both losing money.

He pointed out that Smart and Globe have practically monopolized the mobile phone service industry in the country, having bought smaller competitors Piltel and Islacom.

"These companies continue to make a killing," Beltran said. "The very idea that they're losing money is ludicrous. Just last Christmas, Globe and Smart's services went into overdrive because of the millions of text messages that flooded their relay networks, and that overdrive automatically translates into billions of pesos," Beltran pointed out.

He also blamed the alleged abuse of the two GSM service providers to the implementation of the deregulation policy.

"The interest of subscribers cannot be protected in a deregulated telecoms industry because 'open' and 'free-for-all' competition warrants minimal government intervention and tolerates wanton abuses of industry players," Beltran explained.

The activist-turned-congressman also hit Smart and Globe for allegedly insisting that expansion plans would benefit the people and the economy.

"If this is true, then how come they're both salivating over the prospect of expanding their businesses mostly in the urban areas, giving only token attention to the provinces where development is always preceded by the word 'under' and where the terms 'backward' or 'poor' best describe social services?" he asked.

Earlier, the consumer advocacy group Txtpower warned of mass actions against the National Telecommunications Commission's (NTC) approval of the second 33 percent cut in the previous 150 free text messages that users were allowed.

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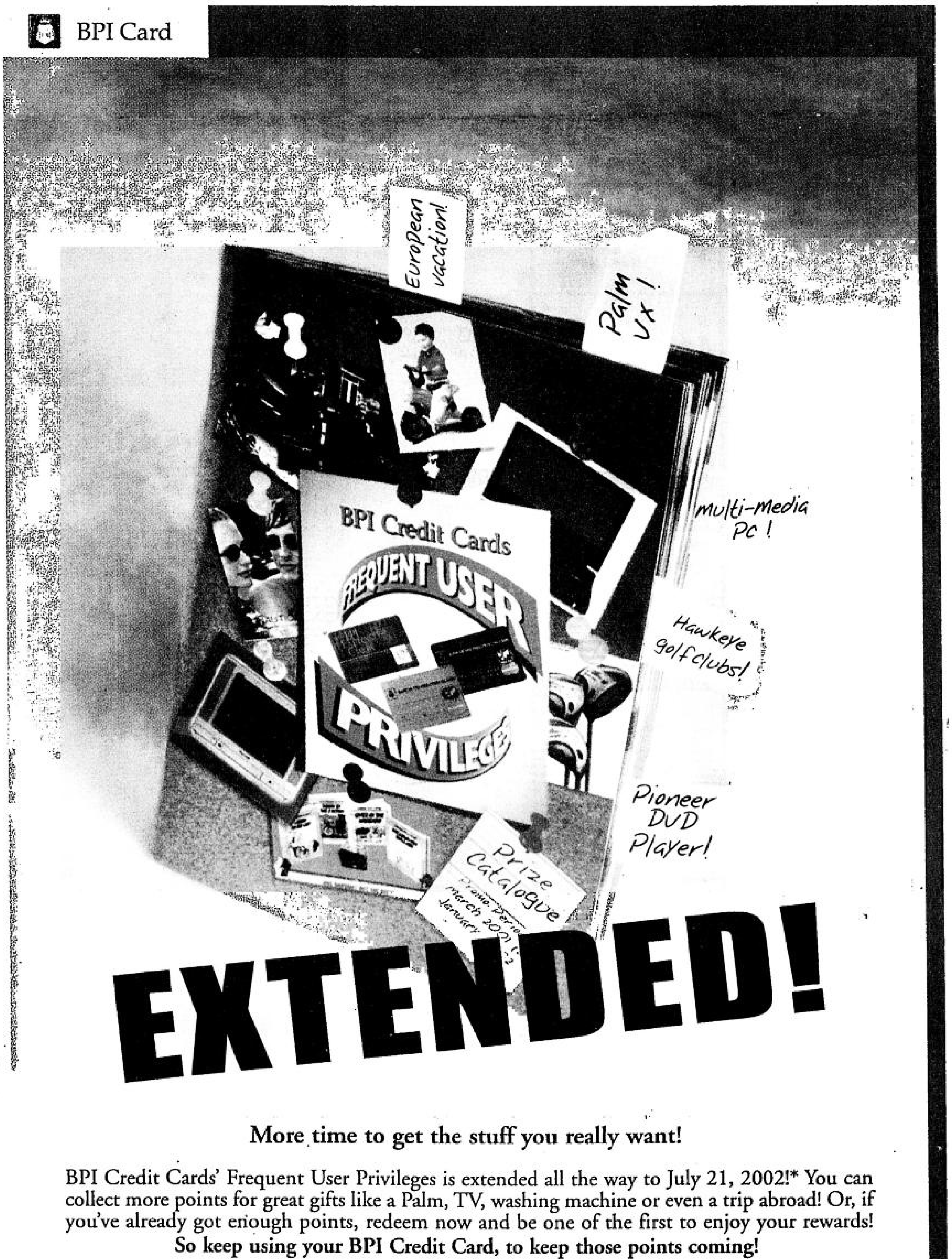

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Inmate dies while sleeping

AN INMATE of the Manila City Jail, charged with two counts of rape, died moaning in his sleep inside his cell before dawn yesterday.

Joel Tenorio, 28, assigned to cell 13 of the Manila City Jail in Sta. Cruz, Manila, did not wake from his sleep and was already dead before he was brought to the hospital, said detective Raul Olavario, of the Western Police District-homicide section.

Olavario said Tenorio shared his cell with members of the Commando Gang. He said Tenorio died about 2 a.m. yesterday. *Philip C. Tubeza*

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2	ON THE LINE In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	BAHAY NI LOLA In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
4	YAMASHITA In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

GLORIETTA 4

1	ON THE LINE In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
2	THE LORD OF THE RINGS In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	THE LORD OF THE RINGS THX In DSD/SDDS/DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4	GLASS HOUSE Art Film In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5	BAGONG BUWAN In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
6	THE LORD OF THE RINGS In DTS/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
7	THE LORD OF THE RINGS In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

GREENBELT

1	CHUNHYANG In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
2	THE LORD OF THE RINGS. In SONY DYNAMIC DIGITAL SOUND
3	ON THE LINE In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
4	WEEKEND WITH POPS Onstage

ALABANG TOWN CENTER

1	THE LORD OF THE RINGS THX In DSD/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
2	THE LORD OF THE RINGS In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	THE LORD OF THE RINGS In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4	ON THE LINE In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5	BAGONG BUWAN In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

EMAIL: mmta@asia.com

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DDS)	LORD OF THE RINGS
2 (SDDS)	LORD OF THE RINGS
3 (DTS)	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
4 GOLD (DTS)	YAMASHITA
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RINGS
6 GOLD (SDDS)	LORD OF THE RINGS
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	BAGONG BUWAN
8	ON THE LINE
9	BAHAY NI LOLA
10	HUBOG

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486

1	YAMASHITA
2	MGA BATANG LANSANGAN
3 (DTS)	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
4	HUBOG
5	BAHAY NI LOLA
6 (DTS)	

Golden Pearl THX

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 831.6603

1	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
2	LORD OF THE RINGS
3	BEHIND ENEMY LINES

starmall Movies
(Shaw Blvd.) tel 724.4986

1	BAGONG BUWAN
2	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
3	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	LORD OF THE RINGS
5	HUBOG

METROPOLIS star
543.3927 loc. 150

1	YAMASHITA
2	HUBOG
3	LORD OF THE RINGS
4	BAGONG BUWAN
5	MVP
6	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
7	RESERVE
8	RESERVE

PREMIERE CINEMA THX
(Makati City) tel 751.2011 to13

1	BEHIND ENEMY LINES

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	BAGONG BUWAN
2	BAHAY NI LOLA

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL, INC.
tel 930.9515

1	
2	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
3	MGA BATANG LANSANGAN

Spring
(Libertad, Pasay City) tel 831.7864

1	BATANG LANSANGAN
A	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
2	MGA BATANG LANSANGAN
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	BAHAY NI LOLA

GOTESCO CINEMA

City
(Manila) tel 734.8588

1 (DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RINGS
2	RESERVE
3	RESERVE
4	HUBOG
5	YAMASHITA
6	ON THE LINE
7 (DTS)	BEHIND ENEMY
8 (SDDS)	GLASS HOUSE
9 (DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RINGS

Caloocan
tel 362.3508

2	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO

Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1	YAMASHITA
2	BAGONG BUWAN
3	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
4 (SDDS)	LORD OF THE RINGS
5	ON THE LINE
6 (DOLBY)	HUBOG
7 (DTS)	BEHIND ENEMY
8	MGA BATANG LANSANGAN
9	LORD OF THE RINGS

Commonwealth
tel 951.0083

1 (DTS)	BEHIND ENEMY
2	HUBOG
3	YAMASHITA
4	BAGONG BUWAN
5 (SDDS)	LORD OF THE RINGS
6	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
7 (DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RINGS
8	BAHAY NI LOLA

Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3 (DTS)	HUBOG
4	YAMASHITA
5 (SDDS)	LORD OF THE RINGS

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO

Sampaguita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888

1	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson	TATARIN
Lords	MGA BATANG LANSANGAN
Jennet	HUBOG

THE MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	LORD OF THE RINGS
2	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
3	YAMASHITA

Prima
(Pasig) tel 641.1215

3	MGA BATANG LANSANGAN

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238

1 (DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RINGS
2	YAMASHITA
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
5	BEHIND ENEMY

New Divisoria Mall
DIVISORIA CINEMA
tel 244.4619

1	LORD OF THE RINGS
2	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
3	BEHIND ENEMY
4	CLOSED
5	CLOSED
6	HUBOG

Baclaran LRT
LRT CINEMA
tel 512.0115

1 (DOLBY)	BRO, KAHIT SAAN
2	HUBOG
3	

Berma
tel 879.2029

1	MGA BATANG LANSANGAN
2	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO

CitiMall
(Parañaque) tel 820.7269

1	BEHIND ENEMY
2	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
tel (049) 534.2185 / 534.2198

1	YAMASHITA
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3 (DTS)	BEHIND ENEMY

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	BAGONG BUWAN
2 (DTS)	BAHAY NI LOLA
3 (DOLBY)	BEHIND ENEMY
4	YAMASHITA

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1	BAHAY NI LOLA
2 (DOLBY)	YAMASHITA
3 (DTS)	BEHIND ENEMY
4	BAGONG BUWAN

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	YAMASHITA
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3	SOON TO OPEN
4	SOON TO OPEN

Cinema 2000 MovieTown
(Tarlac)

1	HUBOG
2	TATARIN
3 (DOLBY)	BAHAY NI LOLA
4 (DTS)	YAMASHITA

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	LORD OF THE RINGS
2	BEHIND ENEMY
3	YAMASHITA
4 (DTS)	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	YAMASHITA
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3 (DTS)	BEHIND ENEMY
4	4 FATHERS
5	BAGONG BUWAN

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
2	BAGONG BUWAN
3	BEHIND ENEMY

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249-2558

1	BEHIND ENEMY
2	BAGONG BUWAN
3	TATARIN

Olivarez Tagaytay
tel (046) 413.0311

1	TATARIN
2	BAGONG BUWAN
3	YAMASHITA

Morales Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.9736

1	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
2	BAGONG BUWAN
3	BEHIND ENEMY

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

1 (DTS)	BAGONG BUWAN
2 (DTS)	BEHIND ENEMY

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	HUBOG
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	HUBOG
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3	YAMASHITA
4	ROCKSTAR

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

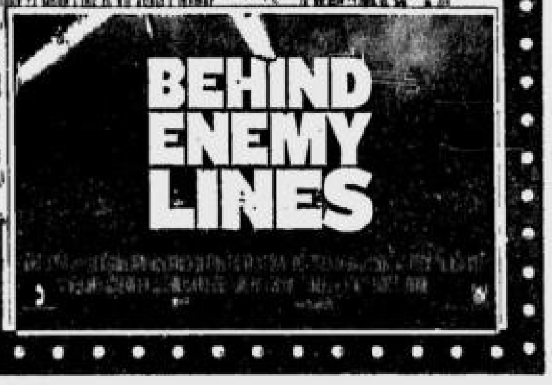
1 (DOLBY EX)	YAMASHITA
2	HUBOG
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4 (DTS ES)	BAHAY NI LOLA

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

CMG INTERNATIONAL
Mile Long Compound, Amorsolo cor. Dela Rosa St., Makati City
Tel No.: 750-8314 to 15
E-Mail: [illegible]
For VIP, Gold, Silver membership, call: 750-8142 to 84
For [illegible], call: 751-2010 to 13

PREMIERE CINEMA THX NOW SHOWING



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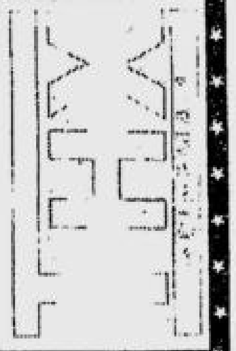
http://www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

GALLERIA
632-0115-16 / 633-7041 loc. 279

1	LORD OF THE RING
2	LORD OF THE RING
3	GLASS HOUSE
4	LORD OF THE RING
5	LORD OF THE RING
6	ON THE LINE
7	BEHIND ENEMY
8	BAHAY NI LOLA
9	BAGONG BUWAN
10	YAMASHITA



ERMITA
536-7809 TO 12

1	LORD OF THE RING
2	BEHIND ENEMY
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	GLASS HOUSE
5	LORD OF THE RING
6	LORD OF THE RING
7	ON THE LINE

METRO EAST
632-0115-16 / 633-7041

1	HUBOG
2	LORD OF THE RING
3	LORD OF THE RING
4	YAMASHITA
5	BAGONG BUWAN
6	BRO
7	BEHIND ENEMY
8	BAHAY NI LOLA

NOVALICHES
936-0229 to 31

1	LORD OF THE RING
2	LORD OF THE RING
3	BEHIND ENEMY
4	YAMASHITA
5	BAHAY NI LOLA
6	BAGONG BUWAN
7	ON THE LINE
8	BRO

IMUS
(046) 471-8188

1	LORD OF THE RING
2	BAGONG BUWAN
3	YAMASHITA
4	ON THE LINE
5	LORD OF THE RING
6	BEHIND ENEMY

BACOLOD
(034) 441-0453 / 0458

1	YAMASHITA
2	HUBOG
3	BAHAY NI LOLA
4	THE SCORE
5	ROCKSTAR
6	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW

ILOILO
(033) 330- 9077 / 8078

1	YAMASHITA
2	HUBOG
3	BAHAY NI LOLA
4	BAGONG BUWAN
5	TATARIN
6	SUMMER CATCH

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101

ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	YAMASHITA
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	BAHAY NI LOLA
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	LORD OF THE RINGS
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	BAGONG BUWAN
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	HUBOG
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RINGS
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7 (DOLBY)	ON THE LINE
FARMERS PLAZA-1 (DOLBY)	BRO. KAHIT SAANG ENGKWENTRO
FARMERS PLAZA-2 (DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RINGS
FIESTA CARNIVAL	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
NEW FRONTIER	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

MANILA

EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	DOS EKIS / WILD SIDE
ODEON	LORD OF THE RINGS
ODEON-2	HUBOG
ROBEN	BRO. KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
TANDEM-1	SEX MEDUSA
TANDEM-2	SEX EDUCATION
TIMES	KNIGHT'S TAIL / THE BODY

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	ORIGINAL SIN
QUEZON-1	MGA BATANG LANSANGAN
REMAR	BRO. KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
REMAR-2	HUBOG

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

A	MGA BATANG LANSANGAN
B	BRO. KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
C	HUBOG

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED
CINEMA-2	THE LORD OF THE RINGS

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	BAHAY NI LOLA
CINEMA-2	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
CINEMA-3	MGA BATANG LANSANGAN
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	BAGONG BUWAN
CINEMA-6	HUBOG
CINEMA-7	SUMMER CATCH
CINEMA-8	TATARIN
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	LORD OF THE RINGS
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	LORD OF THE RINGS
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	LORD OF THE RINGS
CINEMA-12	ON THE LINE
CINEMA-14	BAGONG BUWAN
CINEMA-15	YAMASHITA

LORES

CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-3	CLOSED

POWER PLANT CINEMA

CINEMA-1	ON THE LINE
CINEMA-2	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
CINEMA-3	THE LORD OF THE RINGS
CINEMA-4	THE LORD OF THE RINGS
CINEMA-5	THE GLASS HOUSE
CINEMA-6	THE LORD OF THE RINGS

UNIWIDE METROMALL

(LAS PIÑAS)	
CINEMA-1	
CINEMA-2	
CINEMA-4	

UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL

(PARAÑAQUE)	
CINEMA-1	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
CINEMA-2	THE OTHER SIDE OF LOVE
CINEMA-4	ALAMID

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

Nestor U. Torre's column will resume publication tomorrow, Jan. 8, 2002 –Ed.

SM CINEMA

SM Dial-A-Movie Tel. 633-9999

NOW SHOWING

SM CITY BACOOR
4173868

1	YAMASHITA
2	ON THE LINE
3	LORD OF THE RINGS
4	BAGONG BUWAN
5	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
6	BAHAY NI LOLA
7	BRO, KAHIT SAAN
8	HUBOG

SM CENTERPOINT
7149522 -7161416

1	LORD OF THE RINGS
2	HUBOG
3	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
4	BRO, KAHIT SAAN
5	LORD OF THE RINGS
6	BAHAY NI LOLA
7	BAGONG BUWAN
8	ON THE LINE
9	YAMASHITA
10	TATARIN

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749

1	BAGONG BUWAN
2	HUBOG
3	LORD OF THE RINGS
4	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
5	YAMASHITA
6	BAHAY NI LOLA
7	LORD OF THE RINGS
8	LORD OF THE RINGS
9	BAGONG BUWAN
10	TATARIN
11	ON THE LINE
12	BRO, KAHIT SAAN

SM CITY MANILA
5239240

1	LORD OF THE RINGS
2	GLASS HOUSE
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	ON THE LINE
5	YAMASHITA
6	LORD OF THE RINGS
7	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
8	BAHAY NI LOLA
9	LORD OF THE RINGS
10	HUBOG
11	TATARIN
12	LORD OF THE RINGS

SM MEGAMALL
6331901 • 6329401

1	LORD OF THE RINGS
2	GLASS HOUSE
3	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
4	LORD OF THE RING
5	YAMASHITA
6	ON THE LINE
7	HUBOG
8	LORD OF THE RING
9	BAGONG BUWAN
10	LORD OF THE RINGS
11	TATARIN
12	BAHAY NI LOLA

SM TUTUBAN
2514302

1	LORD OF THE RINGS
2	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	HUBOG

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295452

1	HUBOG
2	LORD OF THE RINGS
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	YAMASHITA
5	ON THE LINE
6	LORD OF THE RINGS
7	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
8	LORD OF THE RINGS
9	TATARIN
10	LORD OF THE RINGS
11	GLASS HOUSE
12	LORD OF THE RINGS

SM SOUTHMALL
8066088 • 8066782

1	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
2	ON THE LINE
3	LORD OF THE RINGS
4	BAHAY NI LOLA
5	TATARIN
6	HUBOG
7	BAGONG BUWAN
8	LORD OF THE RINGS
9	YAMASHITA
10	BEHIND ENEMY LINES

SM GUADALUPE COMM'L
8826905

1	TATARIN
2	LORD OF THE RINGS
3	BEHIND ENEMY LINES

SM CEBU
2313076

1	ON THE LINE
2	MUSKETEER
3	SUMMER CATCH
4	MVP
5	BAHAY NI LOLA
6	4 FATHERS
7	4 FATHERS

SM ILOILO
3209422

1	HUBOG
2	CLOSED
3	SUMMER CATCH
4	YAMASHITA
5	BAGONG BUWAN
6	BAHAY NI LOLA
7	CLOSED
8	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW

SM PAMPANGA
7128015

1	BAGONG BUWAN
2	ON THE LINE
3	YAMASHITA
4	BATANG LANSANGAN
5	HUBOG
6	BAHAY NI LOLA

SM SUCAT
8294975

1	BAGONG BUWAN
2	BEHIND ENEMY LINES
3	LORD OF THE RINGS
4	ON THE LINE

SM DAVAO

1	YAMASHITA
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3	ON THE LINE
4	BAGONG BUWAN
5	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
6	SUMMER CATCH

DIGITAL dts SOUND DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND·EX

Movies are subject to change without prior notice

ENTERTAINMENT

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

New Year with new hairstyle, more red lipsticks and love life 'on hiatus'

KRIS AND TELL

Kris Aquino

IF you've been noticing on TV and in magazines, very straight hair, but with pronounced layers, as opposed to the classic one-length is very "in." I'd sported the wavy backflip for almost the entire 2001, it was time for a change. My curling iron is now stored away, time for the "plantsa."

My hairstylist, **Bambbi Fuentes,** gave me a light, non-overheating straightening iron for an early Christmas present and I've been making full use of it. There's a great new "Sebastian" product out in the market which I discovered a couple of weeks ago. It's part of the "Laminates" line, and it's called "Straightening Spray: Transforming Polish" It's a gel that shakes to a liquid and after working the straightening iron through the hair, it holds like a gel, keeping hair straight, defined and super glossy! Trust me, if you're going to be ironing or blow-drying your hair straight, this is the product you should be using.

I tried my best to avoid the newly opened free-standing MAC boutique in Glorietta, just because I knew a visit there would severely strain my credit card. I succumbed after a month of resisting.

If you've noticed, I love red lipsticks. With the right red, your face comes alive and your smile becomes almost blindingly radiant, especially now that I've gone back to my natural hair color, a dark, almost black shade.

There were three unbelievably showstopping shades of MAC red lispticks. My favorite is provocatively named "Merry Mistress. It's similar to the red packaging of my favorite chocolate, Maltesers.

The next red is "Ruby Woo," a more matte red, almost with a touch of brown added to deepen the shade. The last is the classic "MAC Red." This color is reminiscent of the cherries that are put in cocktails.

For added pizzazz, especially at night, a dab of MAC's "All Over Lip Lacquer" in "Twinkie" does the trick. It's a gold-speckled gloss, that makes the lips seem more inviting, but don't overdo it, because too much gloss will make you look like you just ate a whole *lechon!*

I first tried "Lush" soaps when **Richard** and **Lucy Gomez** sent me some, after their trip to London last summer. When Lush opened in Glorietta recently, I went there to steek up. None of the newspaper features about Lush's store adequately prepared me for the enchanting lay-out of the store. I love supermarket shopping, but this was heavenly, a veritable "grocery" of all-natural shower +gels, shampoos and soaps.

I'm a sucker for creative labeling (that's why Origins and Philosophy are also among my favorite brands). Lush has two shampoos which I've been using and I now swear by. "Washday Greens" is recommended for hair that gets greasy or if you have fine or thinning hair. It's the same color as spearmint flavored Halls.

The other shampoo I've come to like is "Antiphilitron." This is a lemon yellow shampoo which the label said is great in removing silicone (which is present in almost all hair glosses and shine serums), as well as chlorine for the avid swimmers out there.

For conditioning, I recommend "Coolaulin," which is a coconut conditioner, great for making hair soft and shiny.

"Happy for S.A.D." is a combination body wash-shampoo. It has a clean, citrusy scent, but it's colored deep blue-violet, probably because of a fresh orchid infusion listed in the ingredients.

I read my book, "Aromatherapy, A Practical Introduction" by **Sandra White** that these scent of orange is "useful for depression and sadness."

POWER PLANT
CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41 DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

ON THE LINE - GP 11:25, 1:30, 3:35, 5:40, 7:45, 9:50	LORD OF THE RINGS - GP 1:00, 4:30, 8:00	LORD OF THE RINGS - GP 11:05, 2:35, 6:05, 9:35
LORD OF THE RINGS - GP 10:20, 1:50, 5:20, 8:50	GLASS HOUSE - P 13 12:25, 2:40, 4:55, 7:10, 9:30	LORD OF THE RINGS - GP 11:50, 3:20, 6:50, 10:20

Matinee, P80, Mon.-Fri., 11:00 am to 4:45 pm Screenings, Free Seating.

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MANHATTAN ASIA FILMS, INC.
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Sunshine Dizon Joanna Gonzales
and
Shaina Magdayao
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Ellen's SKIN CARE & PERMANENT COSMETICS CORPORATION Aesthetic Center
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PCSO

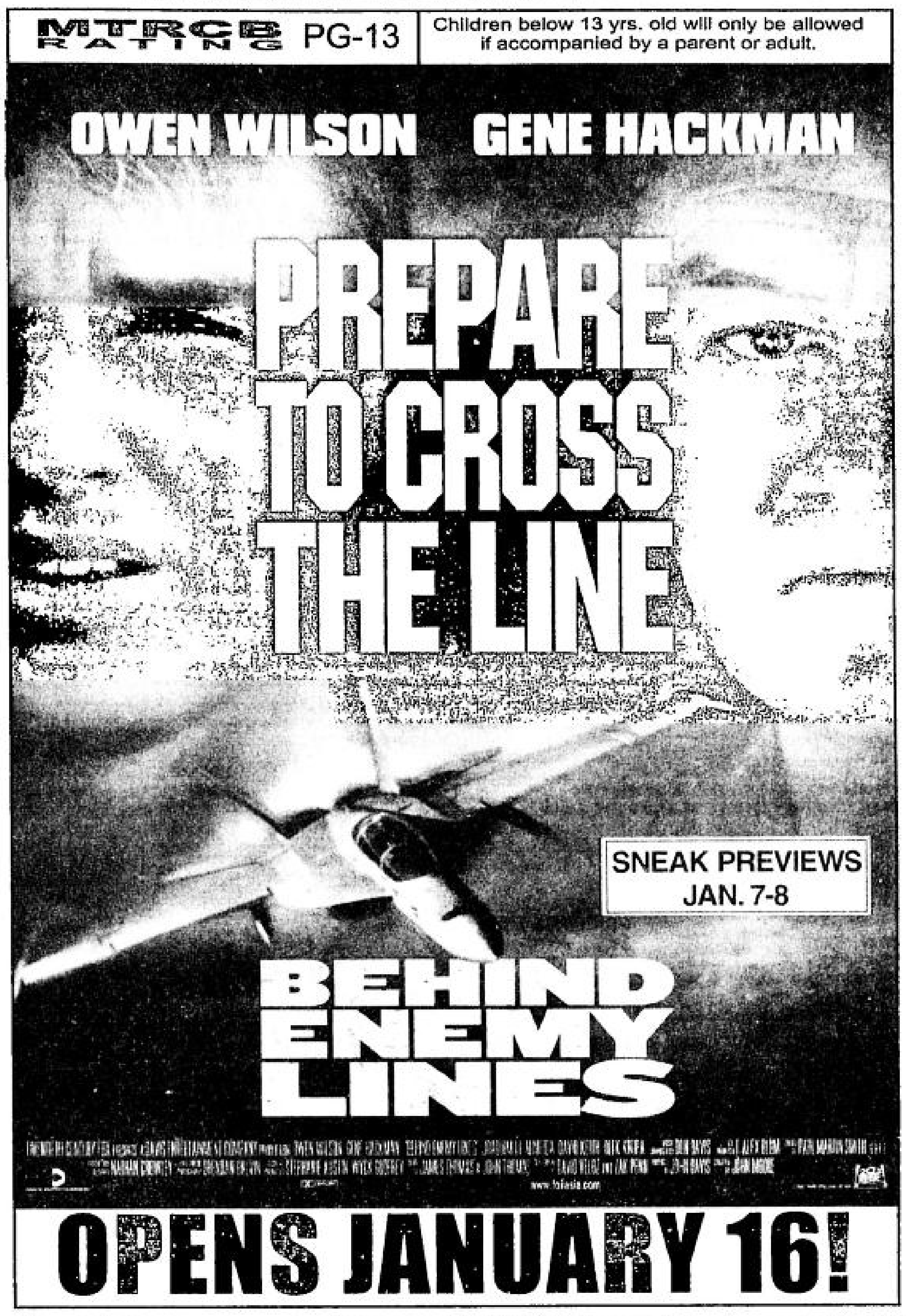
AYALA CINEMAS ARTFILM GREENBELT Art Film
NOW SHOWING
MTRCB RATING ▶ R Restricted | Strictly for ADULTS. No one below 18 yrs. may be admitted.

JAN DARA

This sumptuous, intensely sexual epic serves as both a portrait of Thailand in the thirties and a marvellous introduction to the work of Nonzee Nimibutr, Thailands pre-eminent filmmaker.

Jan Dara is the most controversial and erotic best-seller in all Thai literature. In the time since its publication in 1966, numerous filmmakers have tried to purchase the movie rights from the authors heir without success. However, on the strength of his 1999 thriller Nang Nak, an award-winning ghost story also adapted from a fundamental Thai text, he was able to convince those holding the rights to let him develop it.

Based on a controversial Thai novel, this is the story of a young man who returns to his father's house seeking revenge. He discovers that while he had always hated his father for the way he treated women, he may be destined to repeat the past in order to conquer it.



MTRCB RATING PG-13 | Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult.
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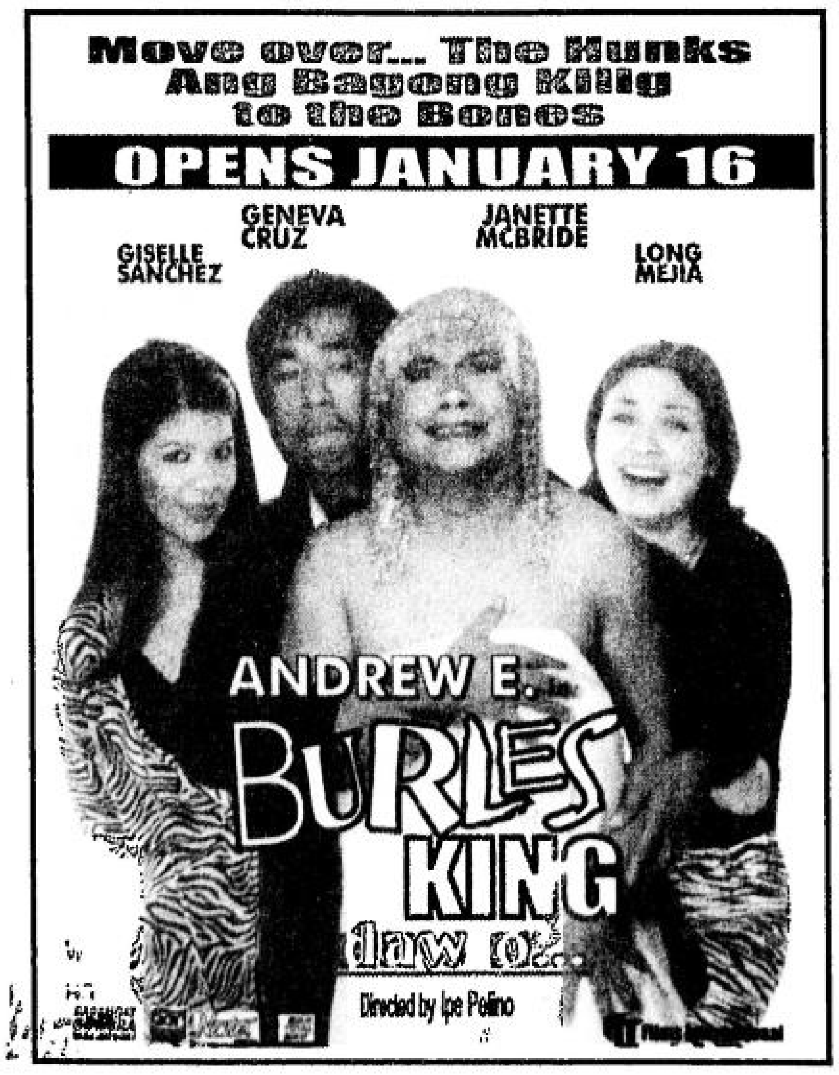

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1. Promo duration is from November 20, 2001-January 10, 2002. Promo begins on November 2[illegible], 2001 in the provinces.
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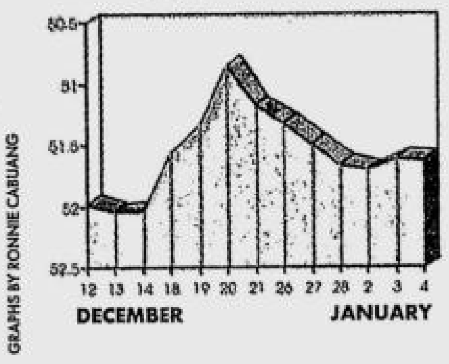

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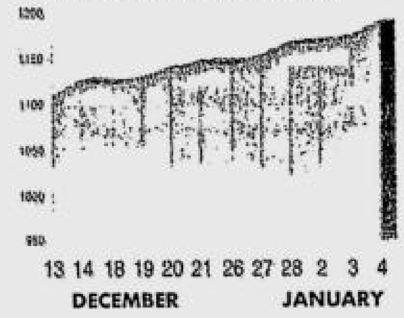
STOCK MARKET

Stocks to rise

THE LOCAL stock market is expected to stay in positive territory this week although analysts said profit-taking might erode some gains after most stocks have reached overbought levels.

This developed as the market welcomed the new year last week with renewed optimism fueled by expectations of a gradual global economic rebound this year following an improvement in consumer confidence in the United States in December. *(See story on Page B4.)*

PSE Composite Index



(See stock market report on Page B4)

Lehman, Metrobank near deal on asset management company

BY CLARISSA S. BATINO

AMERICAN investment bank Lehman Bros. is set to sign a memorandum of agreement with the country's largest lender, the Metrobank Group, to jointly put up an asset management company that would help the local bank dispose of P31 billion worth of soured loans.

INQUIRER sources said Lehman was about to conclude its three-month due-diligence audit of Metrobank's loan portfolio.

If ever, the Lehman and Metrobank partnership would be the first asset management venture to be forged by a local bank with a foreign partner.

Lehman had committed to invest $1 billion in the Philippines to buy local banks' bad loans, housing mortgages of the government, to finance the development of new housing projects and to invest in other capital market opportunities such as the securitization of state earnings from the Malampaya natural gas project.

A central bank official said this would pave the way for the country's largest bank to get rid of P30.95 billion worth of non-performing loans as of the third quarter last year, an amount comprising 17.21 percent of its total loan portfolio of P179.89 billion.

Another source said US firm Cerberus Ltd. was also in serious talks with another local bank for a similar partnership.

Other banks that have been scouting for a foreign partner to solve their growing NPL burden are fourth largest Equitable PCI Bank, fifth largest Land Bank of the Philippines, and sixth largest Philippine National Bank.

As of the third quarter, Equitable PCI's bad loans of P27.15 billion accounted for 20.99 percent of its total loan portfolio worth P129 billion, while Landbank's NPL worth P30.59 billion was 26.27 percent of its P116.4-billion loan portfolio.

PNB's soured loans of P51.16 billion were already more than half or 53 percent of its P96.5-billion loan portfolio.

As of October, the bad loans of the country's 44 locally operating commercial banks already reached P281 billion or 18.81 percent of the industry's total loan portfolio.

A loan whose principal or interest had been unpaid for three consecutive months is classified as non-performing.

Sources said the Lehman and Metrobank partnership would have to wait for the enactment of the law that would provide incentives to asset management companies. But forging the agreement would now give them a headstart.

Cerberus had also forged a memorandum of understanding with the Philippine government on a $1.5-billion investment package.

The amount would be used to buy local banks' NPLs and to acquire the government's housing mortgages.

Meanwhile, Metrobank has attracted a $100-million debt capital or the so-called tier-2 investment from Singapore-based Dunmore Asset Ltd., a venture capital group.

The bank issued bonds to Dunmore Asset and would use the proceeds to buy dollar-denominated sovereign bonds, according to Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

The debt investment made by Dunmore Asset would mature in 10 years and could not be pre-terminated in the first five years when it will earn an interest of 9.8 percent.

From the sixth to the 10th year, the yield of Dunmore's investment should go up by a percentage point. Reyes said the bank should make money from its Philippine bond investments that is more than enough to pay Dunmore Asset.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the central bank was encouraging local lenders to tap tier-2 capital in lieu of a straight equity investment to help improve their balance sheet.

A tier-2 capital is also referred to as subordinated debt. It is an investment that behaves like a deposit because it earns a pre-determined rate unlike a shareholder whose rate of return depends on the financial performance.

Buenaventura said other lenders like Equitable PCI may follow Metrobank's lead and also try to entice debt capital into its fold.

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Gov't plans to impose price ceiling on AUVs

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

REVO, Adventure: Among most popular AUVs in the country.

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry is proposing the imposition of a price ceiling on Asian utility vehicles that will continue to enjoy the tax exemption as part of the agency's proposed tax reform package for the automotive industry.

Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel Roxas II said the price ceiling would ensure that only basic models of the AUVs would be exempted from taxes while the more expensive, dressed-up models would be levied.

"We are currently determining the average base price of AUVs which we think is close to P600,000," Roxas said.

He said that people who could afford to buy vehicles higher than the price ceiling should be able to shoulder the taxes like all other buyers of cars and pickup trucks.

The DTI and the Department of Finance have agreed to limit the tax exemption only on the basic AUVs under the proposed reforms in vehicle taxation. A key change in the vehicle tax system is the shift from engine size to selling price as the basis for tax imposition and computation.

Roxas said these reforms were meant to plug the loopholes in the 10-seater exemption policy that was intended to benefit buyers of AUVs but has been exploited by importers of sport utility vehicles. Under this system, all vehicles with a passenger capacity of at least 10 are tax exempt.

But assemblers have shrewdly added jump seats in the SUV compartment to enjoy the same tax exemptions as those enjoyed by AUVs. "We believe it is unfair that people who buy P2 million worth of SUVs do not pay taxes because they ride on the AUV exemption," Roxas said.

The government currently slaps excise taxes on vehicles based on engine sizes—15 percent for 1600 cc gas and 1800 cc diesel engines; 35 percent for 2-liter gas and 2.3-liter diesel engines; 50 percent for 2.7-liter and 3-liter diesel engines; and 100 percent for engines more than for 2.7-liter and 3-liter diesel engines. With the proposed reforms, vehicle buyers will be made to pay taxes based on how much they paid for their vehicles which effectively plugs the loopholes of the old system.

The DOF estimated that these reforms would generate as much as P9 billion in additional revenues to help the government bridge the projected P130-billion budget deficit this year.

Landco, partners to develop ₱600-M Punta Fuego II project

By Doris C. Dumlao

LANDCO Pacific Corp., a unit of property developer Metro Pacific Corp., has tied up with the Pedrosa and Roxas families to build a new leisure estate in Batangas worth up to P600 million. The project will serve as the second phase of Landco's plush Terrazas de Punta Fuego project.

In an interview with the INQUIRER, MPC chair and acting CEO Manuel Pangilinan said that despite MPC's current corporate restructuring, its leisure estate arm Land Co. would pursue its own projects and that it was now all set to proceed with Punta Fuego 2.

Landco assistant vice president Patrick Villano explained in a separate interview that under the agreement, Landco would anchor the development of a 42-hectare beach property in the middle of the Munting Buhangin cove owned by the Pedrosa family's holding company Peace Inc.

The Roxas family, which was likewise Landco's partner in the 88-hectare Punta Fuego 1 project, will be coming in as the co-developer of Punta Fuego 2. In Punta Fuego 1, Landco was the developer while the Roxases' Roxaco Land Co. was merely the lot owner.

Villano noted that a new joint venture company, Fuego Land Co., was earlier formed with Roxaco to undertake the development of the Pedrosas' lot. He said the groundbreaking for the new project would take place within the first quarter of this year.

There are some 300 lots to be sold in Punta Fuego 2 as against Punta Fuego 1's 550 to 600 lots. The second phase is 15 to 20 minutes away from Punta Fuego 1 by road or by boat but it is 20 minutes closer to Manila.

Villano said Landco decided to pursue the expansion of Punta Fuego despite the continuing real estate slump partly because of the project's strategic positioning and also because of increasing demand from a niche market for this type of development project.

He said it would take about three to four years to complete the development of Punta Fuego 2. He noted that the development cost, estimated at P500-P600 million excluding the lot, would be financed with the retained earnings and seed money from the developers.

"There will be no new borrowings for this project," he said.

Unlike other leisure estates, Villano said the vision for Punta Fuego 2 was to provide a vacation ambience that would not replicate the mansions and facilities that could be found in Manila.

"In Terrazas, about 70 percent of the club involves outdoor development and only 30 percent involves indoor development," he said.

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Magna Carta for Senior Citizens

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

THE HONORABLE Eduardo C. Zialcita, Ph. D., representative of the lone district of Parañaque City, has filed House Bill No. 2102, which he titled the Magna Carta for Senior Citizens. For a rookie congressman, Doctor Zialcita has written an excellent piece of legislation that will benefit the growing number of senior citizens in the country. The voters of Parañaque should be congratulated for electing such a fine congressman.

We Filipinos take good care of our old folks at home. It is our way of paying them back for all the love they showered on us. This is why there are few "Homes for the Aged" in the Philippines. Besides, there are enough sons and daughters who share in taking care of the old folks.

For the old folks, especially in the rural areas, the offspring are the built-in retirement plan. When the parents are too old to work in the rice field, except for occasional weeding and threshing, the offspring are only too glad to provide the old folks with everything they need.

In the urban areas, things are more than a bit different. After a lifetime of work as a professional or a businessman, the senior citizen is not satisfied with the loving care of his children. In the hurly-burly of the city, he sees the world pass him by.

The family doctor will tell him that aside from six to eight hours of sleep daily, and a balanced low-fat, low-salt diet, and regular exercise, and the no-smoking rule, just as important, if not more so, is to lead an active life. Do not isolate yourself. Join an association like the Philippine Association of Retired Persons. Volunteer to do some church or charity work.

Government has become aware of the existence of the senior citizen and the need to help him out. The Senior Citizen Law (Republic Act No. 7432) enacted in 1992 is the first law designed to help the old folks. The trouble with this law is that it defines a senior citizen as one who is at least 60 years old and has an income of not more that P60,000 a year subject to review by the National Economic and Development Authority every three years (no review has ever been done, as far as I know).

In other words, you have to be poor to be considered a senior citizen. And, in order to make use of the benefits under the law such as a 20-percent discount on medicine, you must have the senior citizen's card to prove your poverty. The card replaces begging bowl.

The Zialcita bill does not change the definition of the senior citizen. But it goes beyond granting discounts. Congressman Zialcita calls it the holistic approach. The bill gives tax incentives to employers who hire senior citizens. It punishes severely anyone who does not render any services to the senior citizen by reason of age. It provides free postal charges for any orthopedic devices for older person mailed abroad for repair.

The bill provides that the State shall protect older people from neglect, abandonment and abuse. Elderly disabled person shall be allowed to be assisted by a person of his choice in voting in the national or local elections. The bill recognizes the right of the elderly to take part in processions, rallies, parades, demonstrations, public meetings or any concerted action held in public.

It shall be considered discrimination for the franchisees or operations of sea and land transportation facilities to charge higher fare or to refuse to convey a passenger, his orthopedic devices, personal effects and merchandise by reason of his age or disability.

The bill provides for a lot more goodies including tax exemption for family homes where an older person resides.

If you are a senior citizen or close to being one, after reading this column, grab a pen and paper and write your congressman to support the Zialcita House Bill 2102—the Magna Carta for Senior Citizens.

Chinese company keen on taking over NSC

CHINESE steel giant Shanghai Baoshan Iron & Steel Corp. (Shanghai Baosteel) has expressed an interest in taking over the shuttered National Steel Corp. as part of its regional expansion program.

Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel Roxas II said officials of Baoshan have already visited the country twice (the latest in December last year) to look into the state of NSC's facilities in Iligan as well as to dig more information about the company from local sources.

Roxas said Shanghai Baosteel started looking into NSC when President Macapagal made a state visit to China last year. "That they have come here twice showed that they were keen on NSC."

He expects Shanghai Baosteel to come up with an offer for NSC soon. "If the creditors feel that Shanghai Baosteel has a better offer, then they could disregard the three lease offers they have on the table," Roxas said.

Roxas is chair of the NSC evaluation committee which is presently reviewing the three lease and rehabilitate proposals from Cathay Pacific Steel Corp. and Allengoal Steel Fabrication Trading Co. and Voest Alpine of Austria.

Roxas stressed that the committee's choice was merely recommendatory and not binding since the creditor banks, which has taken over the NSC's assets, have the final say on how to liquidate the assets. NSC has been closed since November 1999 due to its heavy debt and hefty losses.

Shanghai Baosteel produces automobile sheets, pipeline steel, container steel, electrolytic tinplate, refrigerator face panels, high strength drill pipes, rocket parts, thick plates and color coated sheets.

It is part of the Shanghai Baosteel Group Corp. (SBGC) which is building itself into China's refined steel production base and one of the world's top 500 corporations. The group has a production capacity of more than 18 million tons of steel.

Subic exports hit $1.08B

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—Subic Bay Freeport Zone has again surpassed the $1-billion mark in export receipts last year, equaling its feat in 1999 and 2000.

"This achievement, despite the slump in (the) electronics industry, is an indication of bigger things to come," said Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority Chair Felicito Payumo.

The SBMA reported export earnings of $1.08 billion last year after its last quarter performance posted a 27-percent increase, equivalent to $76 million, compared with its year-ago level.

The PhilExport's One-stop Export Documentation Center also reported that Subic's freight on board value for the same period reached $356 million, surpassing year-ago level of $279 million.

Noel Tuliao, PhilExport acting manager, reported that the value increased by about 40 percent in December 2001, with $108 million in export value compared with $64 million posted in 2000.

Despite the slump in the electronics industry, Wistron, an affiliate of the Acer Group of Companies, reported about 100-percent increase in its production.

The Subic Bay Development Management Corp. said Wistron increased its production volume in November alone to 130,000 laptop computers from only 70,000 units in the previous months. *Ansbert Joaquin, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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Deutsche Bank sees stronger peso

By Clarissa S. Batino

DEUTSCHE Bank AG, one of the world's biggest financial groups, has turned more bullish on the peso as it projected that the local currency would improve to 51 against the dollar in six months and end the year at 50 to $1 largely on account of a dramatic turnaround in exports.

In its outlook for 2002 released on Dec. 28, the bank said a stronger current account and an improving domestic and fiscal environment would allow the peso to rally in the coming months.

A projected $6-billion current account surplus was based on what the group believed would be a strong recovery of exports to a 9-percent growth from a contraction of 15 percent in 2001.

Most of the German group's forecast for this year were more bullish than the government's expectations of a flat growth in exports, a peso average of 51.50 to 52.50, an inflation rate of 5 to 6 percent, dollar reserves of as much as $15 billion, and a growth in gross domestic product of 4 to 4.5 percent.

Deutsche Bank said inflation could average at 4.2 percent, the

DEUTSCHE/ B7

SLAMC'S ASSETS UNDER MANAGEMENT REACHES P 1B

Recently, Sun Life Asset Management Company (SLAMC) reached the P 1B level in Assets Under Management (AUM). This is a major milestone for SLAMC considering that the company has only been operational for 19 months.

In the mutual fund industry, AUM is one of the determining factors used in assessing the success of an asset management company. AUM refers to the available funds which the fund managers may invest in various securities. With a big AUM, the investment managers of a mutual fund company gain more leverage to purchase high quality instruments at a good price, which increase the growth potential of the investors' money. In addition to this, a big asset base allows the investment managers to diversify the funds and gain access to a wider variety of securities. And diversification, as we all know, mitigates the negative effects of the market on the clients' investments.

There are several factors that contributed to the growth of Sun Life Asset Management Company's AUM. These include high net sales and low redemption rates. According to the mutual fund statistical report issued by the Investment Company Association of the Philippines, Inc., as of October 2001, the Sun Life Prosperity Equity and Balanced Funds generated the highest year-to-date net sales compared to the other funds in their respective categories. Moreover, among all mutual fund companies in the Philippines, the three funds, under the family of Sun Life Prosperity Funds, had the lowest redemption rate.

Low redemption is usually achieved if the investors are confident about their investment choices and have faith in the expertise of their investment managers. This kind of trust is usually developed if the investments are able to perform according to the investors' expectations.

If a fund is properly managed, it is likely to outperform its benchmark and competitors. It is also likely to provide higher return on investment for its investors. And these are things that investors look for in a savings or investment instrument.

Since their launch, the three funds under the Sun Life Prosperity Funds have always managed to outperform benchmarks. In fact, the Sun Life Prosperity Bond Fund did not only outperform its benchmark, but also managed to generate the highest year-to-date yield at 10.55% net p.a. amongst Bond Funds as of December 2001.

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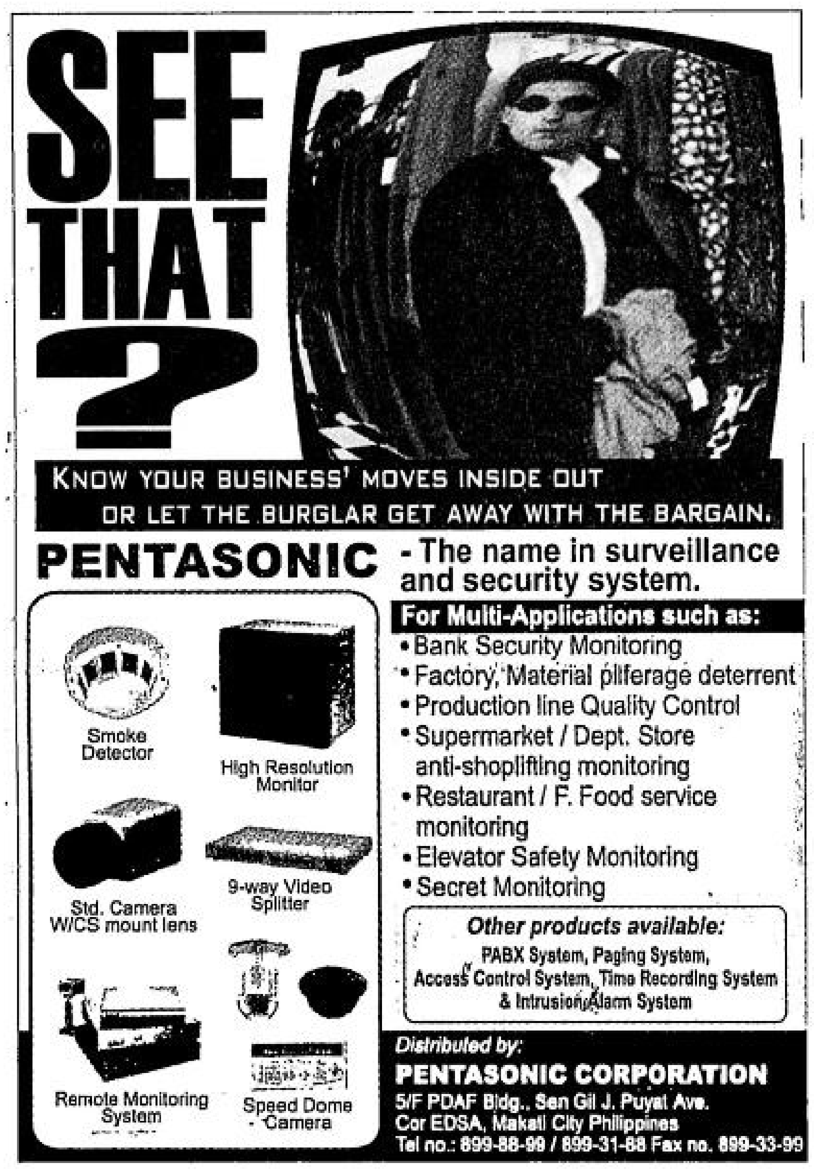
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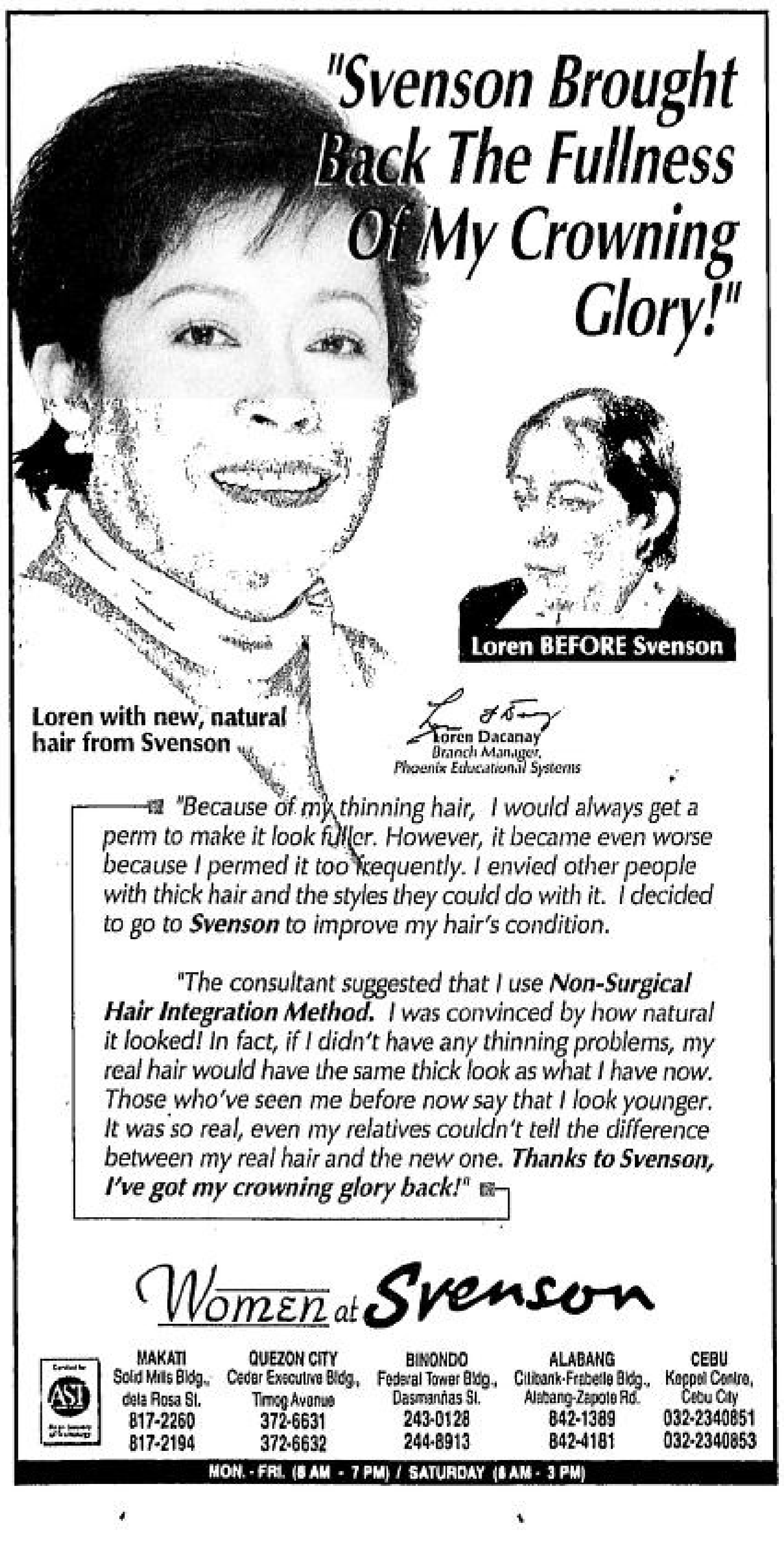
"Svenson Brought Back The Fullness Of My Crowning Glory!"
Loren BEFORE Svenson
Loren with new, natural hair from Svenson
Loren Dacanay
Branch Manager,
Phoenix Educational Systems

*"Because of my thinning hair, I would always get a perm to make it look fuller. However, it became even worse because I permed it too frequently. I envied other people with thick hair and the styles they could do with it. I decided to go to **Svenson** to improve my hair's condition.*

*"The consultant suggested that I use **Non-Surgical Hair Integration Method.** I was convinced by how natural it looked! In fact, if I didn't have any thinning problems, my real hair would have the same thick look as what I have now. Those who've seen me before now say that I look younger. It was so real, even my relatives couldn't tell the difference between my real hair and the new one. **Thanks to Svenson, I've got my crowning glory back!**"*

Women at Svenson

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817-2194	372-6632	244-8913	842-4181	032-2340853

MON. - FRI. (8 AM - 7 PM) / SATURDAY (8 AM - 3 PM)

October 27, 2001 to January 31, 2002
SEAOIL
Kabalikat Mo Sa Hanapbuhay
BAGONG TAON, BAGONG HARI NG DAAN
Pang-hanapbuhay Papremyo ng Seaoil
1ST PRIZE
1 TOYOTA REVO DLX DIESEL 2000 MODEL
Sa highway ng buhay natin,
maghanapbuhay habang nag-si-Seaoil.
Dahil dito, may instant-premyo scratch card ka na,
may pang-hanapbuhay raffle coupon ka pa!
Huwag magpahuli, baka sakali ikaw na ang manalo
ng bagong pang-hanapbuhay na hari ng daan,
ang Toyota Revo DLX Diesel,
sa pagdating ng bagong taon
2ND PRIZE
3 KAWASAKI HD-125CC MOTORCYCLES
3RD PRIZE
5 INTERNET-HIGHWAY READY PC'S. COMPLETE SET W/ MONITOR, CPU, CD ROM AND MODEM.
CONSOLATION PRIZE
10 MOBILE PHONES (NOKIA 3310, units only)
SCRATCH CARD
Actual prizes may vary from photos.

Simple lang para manalo!

1. Ang promong ito ay para sa mga customers ng Seaoil Petroleum. Ang participating outlets ay nasa Metro Manila at provincial stations na magsisimula ng October 27, 2001 hanggang January 31, 2002.
2. Sa bawat P300-halaga ng biniling Seaoil fuel, Prolube lubricant, o Seaoil Palamig items (maging sa isang bilihan o di kaya sa inipong mga resibo ng pagbili) sa loob ng promo period, makakakuha ang customer ng isang game card.

INSTANT PANG-HANAPBUHAY SCRATCH PAPREMYO:

3. I-scratch ang tatlong silver squares sa card. Ang lahat ng scratch cards ay may security code. May premyong makukuha kung may lumabas sa alinmang mga kombinasyong ito:

3 Seaoil logos = 1 Seaoil Special Prize
1 Prolube logo = 1 Seaoil Premium Item

4. Sa pagkuha ng instant na premyo, kailangang i-surrender ang scratch card portion sa Station Officer-in-Charge para ma-validate.
5. Ang lahat ng instant scratch-card prizes ay dapat ma-claim bago mag March 31, 2002. Ang premyong hindi na-claim sa durasyon na ito ay maituturing na forfeited pabor sa Seaoil Petroleum Corporation, sa prior approval ng DTI.
6. Ang mga nanalong game cards na may winning combination at authenticated security codes lamang ang puwedeng manalo. Hindi dapat tanggalin ng customer ang latex sa "VOID IF SCRATCHED" panel. Ang alinmang game card na maituturing na nasira, pinakialaman, gaya, binago sa anumang paraan, o may di mabasang security code ay agad na ituturing na null and void.

PANG-HANAPBUHAY RAFFLE PAPREMYO:

7. Gupitin ang portion ng raffle entry para makasali sa raffle draw. Sa raffle portion ng game card ay dapat isulat ng customer ang kanyang pangalan, address, telepono at lagdaan at ihulog sa designated drop box sa participating outlet o di kaya ilagay sa legal sized white envelope at ipadala ang inyong entries sa:
"Bagong Taon, Bagong Hari Ng Daan"
c/o Seaoil Petroleum Corporation Head Office
G/F Meridian Building
29 Annapolis Street, Greenhills
San Juan, Metro Manila
8. Ang deadline ng pag-submit ng entries ay sa January 31, 2002 hanggang 6 o' clock ng gabi.
9. Ang raffle ay gagawin sa February 8, 2002, sa Seaoil Petroleum Corporation Head Office, G/F Meridian Building, #29 Annapolis Street, Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila in the presence of a DTI representative, para sa mga sumusunod na prizes:
First Prize - 1 Toyota Revo DLX Diesel 2000 MODEL (excluding all registration requirements)
Second Prizes - 3 Kawasaki HD-125CC Motorcycles (excluding all registration requirements) para sa 3 winners
Third Prizes - 5 Internet Highway-Ready PC's Complete set w/ monitor, cpu, cd rom and modem, para sa 5 winners
Consolation Prizes - 10 Mobile Phones (Nokia 3310, units only) para sa 10 winners
10. Ang mananalo ng lahat ng raffle prizes ay padadalhan ng registered mail. Sa pag-claim ng premyo, kailangang mag-prisenta ng kahit na anong valid ID (company o school ID, passport, o driver's license), at kailangan ding ipakita ang natanggap na registered mail.
11. Ang lahat ng raffle prizes ay transferable ngunit hindi sila convertible to cash. Seaoil Petroleum Corp. ang magbabayad 20% tax sa lahat ng premyong higit sa P 10,000.
12. Ang isang customer ay puwede lamang manalo ng isang beses. Kung nabunot nang dalawang beses ang kanyang pangalan, makukuha niya lamang ang isang premyong may mas malaking halaga, at mag-du-draw uli para sa binitawang premyo.
13. Ang lahat ng napanalunang premyo sa draw ay puwedeng ma-claim sa Seaoil Petroleum Corporation Head Office, G/F Meridian Building, #29 Annapolis Street, Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila mula 9:00 a.m. hanggang 6:00 p.m. Lunes hanggang Biyernes.
14. Kapag hindi na-claim ang iyong premyo sa loob ng 60 araw mula sa araw ng notification, ang premyo ay ituturing na forfeited pabor sa Seaoil Petroleum Corporation, sa prior approval ng DTI.
15. Ang lahat ng raffle draw winners ay dapat sumang-ayon na makunan o di kaya magbigay ng litrato para sa darating na announcement-of-winners print ad ng Seaoil.
16. Ang lahat ng empleyado ng Seaoil Petroleum Corporation, mga sister companies nito, Masterminds Asia Communications, mga suppliers ng Seaoil at mga Seaoil dealers, at ang kanilang mga kamag-anak hanggang sa second degree of affinity or consanguinity ay diskuwalipikado sa pagsali sa scratch at raffle promong ito. [S]

SEAOIL
Kabalikat Mo Sa Hanapbuhay
PER DTI NCR PERMIT NO 3454 SERIES OF 2001

Stocks seen to continue rally as more investors come in

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE LOCAL stock market is expected to stay in positive territory this week although analysts said profit-taking might erode some gains after most stocks have reached overbought levels.

This developed as the market welcomed the new year last week with renewed optimism fueled by expectations of a gradual global economic rebound this year following an improvement in consumer confidence in the United States in December.

Also boosted by prospects for a low-interest rate regime, the main-share Philippine Stock Exchange composite index gained another 1.87 percent last week to close at 1,189.89 on Friday.

Eagle Equities president Joseph Roxas said now that the resistance at 1,180 had been breached, there was more room for the Phisix to move up this week.

BPI Securities analyst Spencer Yap said the market remained generally optimistic but might see some correction following recent run-ups. He said it remained to be seen whether the market could consolidate its gains with the return of normal trading activity this week after the long holidays.

"On a positive note, the market has managed to hold on above the 1,150 index level. Buying has also been more broad-based and less centered on a few select issues. The market has been building a base for a sustainable rally with investors counting on favorable economic and corporate results to fuel this recovery," Yap said.

AB Capital Securities analyst Jose Vistan Jr. said that as the market had reached overbought levels for the near term, there were questions as to whether it could sustain the strong year-end rally.

"The market is due for a pullback after rising so strongly. But the correction will be minimal and stocks are expected to sustain the run-up in January, another traditionally strong month for the stock market," Vistan said.

Stock market portal 2tradeasia.com said technical indicators remained positive for issues such as Bank of the Philippine Islands, Meralco "B," SM Prime Holdings and San Miguel Corp. "B."

"What is required at this point is a build-up in volume, which would follow as soon as institutional fund managers see another incentive that would support the market's ascent," it said.

"Investors can unveil additional gifts at least for the initial semester this year, starting off with monetary authorities' recent indication to relax borrowing costs by lowering interest rates. Coupled with officials' firm motive to support the set-up of an Asset Management Company to absorb the banking system's bad loans, the added cut in rates bode well in encouraging lending operations within the financial industry," it explained.

"Property issues should likewise benefit since lower rates would translate to supplementary savings for their big-ticket undertakings while flexible home-and-lot packages should encourage higher take-up rates," it noted.

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of Friday, January 4, 2002)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Bank of the Phil. Islands	58.5	60.5	58.5	59	614,300
China Banking Corp.	580	610	580	610	4,990
Citystate Savings Bank	12.25	12.5	12.25	12.5	16,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	25.5	26.5	25.5	26	830,900
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	199	201	199	201	66,790
Philippine National Bank	64	65	64	65	11,700
Phil. Savings Bank	27	27.5	26.5	27.5	7,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	18	18	17	17	17,000
Security Bank Corp.	17.5	17.75	17.5	17.75	5,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	15.5	15.5	15	15.25	126,300
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Filipino Fund Inc	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	50,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1310	1310	1310	1310	50
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1035	1065	1035	1060	19,880
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	24.25	24.5	24.25	24.5	15,000
Diversified Fin. Network	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	7,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.4	0.42	0.4	0.41	2,850,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	680	680	680	680	16,630
Ipeople Inc.	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	20,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	18,000
Piltel	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	10,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	422.5	430	422.5	425	93,740
Ivantage Corp.	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	100,000
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.017	0.019	0.017	0.019	104,000,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	23	23.5	23	23	189,500
Manila Electric Co. B	33	34.5	33	34	2,247,000
Petron Corp.	1.5	1.56	1.5	1.54	4,411,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.22	2.24	2.2	2.2	3,251,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	150,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2	2	2	2	26,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	150,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	42,700
La Tondena Distillers Inc.	24	24	24	24	10,000
RFM Corp.	2.34	2.34	2.28	2.28	1,736,000
San Miguel Corp. A	43	43.5	42.5	43	95,600
San Miguel Corp. B	54	54.5	54	54	395,600
Vitarich Corp.	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.64	0.65	0.64	0.65	20,000
Ayala Corp.	4.75	4.9	4.75	4.75	7,977,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	25,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.78	0.84	0.78	0.84	1,240,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.63	0.65	0.62	0.64	6,720,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	240,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	0.84	0.84	0.84	0.84	550,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	26	26.5	26	26	96,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	20,000
Guoco Holdings (Phils.)	0.15	0.16	0.15	0.155	360,000
Ionics Inc.	7	7	6.6	6.6	554,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	100,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.2	10,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.71	0.72	0.7	0.71	770,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.21	0.23	0.2	0.21	1,000,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.33	0.34	0.33	0.33	3,150,000
Music Corp.	0.35	0.37	0.35	0.35	10,700,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78	20,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	280,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	950,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.29	0.29	410,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.38	1.4	1.38	1.4	30,000
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.56	0.56	0.42	0.42	170,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.5	142,200
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.53	0.53	0.52	0.52	220,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	24.25	24.5	24.25	24.5	550,600
Equitable PCI Bank-War	1.78	1.88	1.78	1.86	567,000
Globe Telecom Hldg (Pdr)	685	685	685	685	3,200
Omico Corp. Warrant	0.0014	0.0014	0.0014	0.0014	74,000,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.25	10.25	10	10	1,700
Philweb.Com Inc. -Warrants	0.005	0.0055	0.005	0.0055	82,000,000
PROPERTY					
C & P Homes Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	260,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.34	0.35	0.33	0.33	2,190,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	900,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.76	1.8	1.76	1.76	3,190,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	100,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	30,000
SM Development Corp.	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	20,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.5	6.7	6.5	6.6	15,525,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.38	0.39	0.38	0.39	40,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	2.8	3	2.8	3	46,000
Itogon-Suyoc Mines A	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	2,500,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.15	0.16	0.145	0.16	600,000
Omico Corp.	0.0034	0.0036	0.0034	0.0034	22,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.235	0.235	0.23	0.23	200,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	200,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.015	0.016	0.015	0.016	1,100,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0065	0.007	0.0065	0.0065	143,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	43,000,000
Pacifica	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	5,000,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	300,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.22	0.23	0.21	0.21	400,000

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SELLING:		Canlubang Golf	730,000
Alabang "A/B"	Please call	Celebrity	180,000
Baguio Country Club	728,000	Eagle Ridge "A/B/C"	Please call
Eagle Ridge "A"	350,000	Manila Golf (Indv.) & Corp.	Please call
Fontana/Forest Hills	Please call	Manila Polo	2,650,000
Forest Hills "C"	320,000	Manila Southwoods "A"	600,000
Manila Golf (Indv.)	11,950,000	Metropolitan "B"	100,000
Manila Golf (Corp)	14,000,000	Mt. Malarayat "A"	350,000
Manila Polo	2,680,000	Mt. Malarayat "C"	550,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	600,000	Orchard "A/B/C"	Please call
Mimosa/Corp.	200,000/Please call	Riviera "A"	190,000
Philippine Columbian	80,000	Riviera "B"	250,000
Quezon City Sports A/B	220,000	Sta. Elena "A/B"	Please call
Rockwell Club	380,000	Sherwood	Please call
Sta. Elena "A"	1,580,000	Tagaytay Highland Club	360,000
Wack Wack	7,200,000	Tagaytay Highland Golf	760,000
BUYING:		Tagaytay Midland	690,000
Alabang "A/B"	1.475 M/1.5 M	Valle Verde CC/Corp.	Please call
Baguio Country Club	725,000	Valley Golf	230,000
Camp John Hay Golf	Please call	Wack Wack	6,500,000

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CLUB	SELLER	BUYER
Alabang Country Club "A"	1,450,000	-
Alabang Country Club "B"	1,550,000	-
Baguio Country Club	730,000	650,000
Camp John Hay	-	250,000
Capitol Hills Golf & CC	130,000	-
Calatagan Golf	90,000	-
Canyon Woods	260,000	190,000
Canlubang	650,000	-
Celebrity Sports	195,000	170,000
Eagleridge "A"	340,000	300,000
Eastridge	200,000	-
Fontana "D/C"	90,000/140,000	Pls. Call
Forest Hills "A"	230,000	200,000
Manila Polo	-	2,500,000
Manila Golf	-	11,000,000
Makati Sports Club	350,000	-
Manila Southwoods "A"	650,000	600,000
Mt. Malarayat	-	350,000
Orchard	230,000	190,000
Orchard "B"	-	250,000
Phil. Columbian	75,000	-
Punta Fuego	650,000	-
Puerto Azul	170,000	-
Quezon City Sports Club	240,000	-
Riviera Golf	195,000	100,000
Rockwell	450,000	-
Royale Tagaytay	100,000	Pls. Call
Sherwoods	120,000	-
Subic Bay Yatch Club "Corp"	400,000	Pls. Call
Tagaytay Country Club	380,000	340,000
Tagaytay Highlands Golf & CC	730,000	-
Tagaytay Midlands	-	600,000
Valle Verde (Indv.)	175,000	160,000
Valley Golf - 2 shares	-	230,000
Wack-Wack Golf	-	6,450,000

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GG & A Club Shares
SEC License Broker #007575 * As of January 7, 2002

www.ggaclubshares.com

CLUB	BUYER	SELLER
Alabang Country Club "A" (Filipino)	1,400,000	1,550,000
Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	1,450,000	1,750,000
Baguio Country Club	750,000	800,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	80,000	100,000
Calatagan Golf Club "B"	-	110,000
Camp John Hay	Please Call	330,000
Canlubang	-	750,000
Canyonwoods	Please Call	330,000
Capitol Hills	110,000	125,000
Cebu Country Club	-	2,000,000
Celebrity Sports Club	175,000	200,000
Eagle Ridge "A"/"B"/"C"	Please Call	Please Call
Eastridge "A"	Please Call	Please Call
Evercrest "A"	-	100,000
Forest Hills "A"	-	220,000
Forest Hills "B"	-	230,000
Forest Hills "C"	230,000	300,000
Makati Sports Club "A"	260,000	320,000
Makati Sports Club "B"	Please Call	375,000
Manila Golf (Corporate)	13,000,000	14,500,000
Manila Golf (Individual)	11,500,000	13,000,000
Manila Polo	2,600,000	2,700,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	600,000	670,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	700,000	725,000
Metropolitan Club "B"	-	150,000
Montemar (Individual)	-	30,000
Mt. Malarayat	360,000	Please Call
Orchard Golf Club "A"	200,000	260,000
Orchard Golf Club "B"	-	300,000
Orchard Golf Club "C"	-	360,000
Philippine Columbian	-	85,000
Pueblo de Oro "A"/"B"/"C"	-	Please Call
Puerto Azul	-	125,000
Quezon City Sports Club	200,000	230,000
Riviera Golf & Country Club "A"	-	Please Call
Rockwell	Please Call	660,000
Sherwood Hills "A"	-	150,000
Sta. Elena "A"	-	1,850,000
Sta. Elena "B"	-	Please Call
Subic Bay Yacht (Corporate)	-	380,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Individual)	-	190,000
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BSP urges Banco de Oro to list shares this year

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas is urging Banco de Oro, a universal bank controlled by the family of Henry Sy, to pursue a much-delayed public offering of its shares within the year.

"This year, we are telling Banco de Oro that they should list specially if the local stock market improves," BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said.

The central bank chief said Banco de Oro had been postponing its initial public offering. The Sy-controlled bank is required to offer to the public at least 10 percent of its shares within three years after obtaining its license to operate as a universal bank.

The bank had been deferring its IPO for the last three years and was set to go public in September last year but adverse stock market conditions again prevented it from listing its shares.

Banco de Oro is the country's 13th largest bank with assets of P70.9 billion as of the third quarter last year, up 5.1 percent from the P67.5 billion the previous quarter.

Among the country's 14 local universal banks, only Banco de Oro has not gone public.

Buenaventura said the central bank had allowed Banco de Oro to postpone its IPO late last year but the reprieve would no longer apply this year.

"They asked that we allow them to defer the IPO for one quarter and so we did. It would no longer apply this year," the central bank chief said.

Buenaventura also encouraged more local lenders to list their shares on the PSE following the listing of Citystate Savings Bank last week.

"We hope more banks would list because a public offering requires more transparency on these institutions and although the central bank already have strict rules on transparency, the pressure is a lot greater for listed companies," the BSP chief said.

Buenaventura said the central bank would also encourage banks to lend to investors in the local bourse to assist in the recovery of the stock market.

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24 IPOs forecast this year

By Elena R. Torrijos

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission has set a target of 24 initial public offerings this year despite the global economic slowdown and a meager IPO crop last year.

SEC Chair Lilia Bautista said that the 24 IPO target was based on the expectation that oil companies would list this year and the Board of Investments would implement a requirement that companies availing themselves of the agency's incentives should go public.

Under the oil deregulation law, the country's oil firms should have gone public in February last year but the Department of Energy gave them additional time to comply. Shell reportedly is preparing to undertake an IPO this year after posting a positive bottom line last year.

Bautista said she hoped the BOI would faithfully implement a condition that companies granted incentives should go public as this would perk up the PSE, which has been suffering from very low trading volumes.

Bautista also said that during the country's boom years there were close to 30, and at one time even more IPOs, and at the lowest level there were 17, so 24 should be a good target.

Last year, however, there were only three companies that went public: sealant and adhesives maker Federal Chemicals Inc., property firm Primex Corp. and software developer SQL Wizard.

CURRENCIES

Jan 4, 2002

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.111605	1.000000	51.6860
Japan	Yen	0.008438	0.007591	0.3923
United Kingdom	Pound	1.599155	1.438600	74.3555
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.142697	0.128370	6.6349
Switzerland	Franc	0.673741	0.606097	31.3267
Canada	Dollar	0.695754	0.625900	32.3503
Singapore	Dollar	0.601421	0.541038	27.9641
Australia	Dollar	0.571226	0.513875	26.5601
Bahrain	Dinar	2.948712	2.652661	137.1054
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.296426	0.266667	13.7830
Brunei	Dollar	0.598764	0.538648	27.8406
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000107	0.000096	0.0050
Thailand	Baht	0.025247	0.022712	1.1739
UAE	Dirham	0.302725	0.272331	14.0757
Korea	Won	0.000854	0.000768	0.0397
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.899600	46.4967

Firm says investments in John Hay top ₱2B

MORE than P2 billion has already been invested by Camp John Hay Development Corp. in the development of the former military reservation, according to its chair, Robert John Sobrepeña.

He said the figure excluded the lease payment made during CJHDC's first year of operations amounting to P425 million, as well as the advance payment of P250 million made when the lease agreement between the company and the Bases Conversion Development Authority was signed.

Sobrepeña pointed out that the latest structure to be completed was the Camp John Hay Manor Hotel, a first class lodging facility that was opened last Dec. 28.

He said the hotel was an important component of the development of Camp John Hay being undertaken by CJHDC. It has 187 accommodation facilities, which consist of studio type, one- and two-bedroom units.

"The completion of the Manor Hotel is an integral component of the total development of Camp John Hay that we are undertaking to make it a world-crass tourist destination," Sobrepeña said. "We will be certainly pouring in more resources on top of the P2 billion that the corporation has already invested."

Gov't sees lower borrowing rate starting today

BY CLARISSA S. BATINO

A MORE liquid fixed-income market is seen leading to a lower government borrowing rate this year.

National Treasurer Sergio Edeza said on Friday that treasury bill yields should drop by as much as 25 basis points in today's auction, adding that banks had more cash but had yet to find an investment outlet.

The yield on the benchmark 91-day tenor went up by 8.6 points to 8.873 percent on Dec. 18, the last auction held, while offers for the six-month and one-year bills were all rejected as too high. These bids would have propped up the yields on the two instruments by 61.5 points to 10.507 percent and by 93.8 points to 11.638 percent.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho agreed there was some more room for interest rates to go down, saying the national government was certain of having met its budget deficit target of P145 billion last year.

"If we are successful in maintaining fiscal discipline, which we intend to achieve, there are some more room for domestic interest rates to fall," he told reporters.

Edeza said the central bank's plan to ease its policy rates further by at least another quarter of a percentage point would help bring down the government's borrowing rate as reflected by T-bill yields, particularly the benchmark 91-day tenor.

On Thursday, BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said he saw room for an overnight interest rate cut of about 25 to 50 basis points.

Speaking to reporters after the weekly Monetary Board meeting that left rates unchanged, Buenaventura said: "There is room there (for rate cuts). We just have to see the impact of reduction of rates since last year."

Asked by how much the bank was likely to slash rates, he said: "Twenty-five to 50 basis points. That's my initial reaction."

Buenaventura said the timing of the rate cut would depend on factors such as inflation and economic recovery.

"Maybe this month," he said, adding that the move could be before the next US Federal Reserve meeting, scheduled for Jan. 29 to 30.

The BSP cut overnight rates by 25 basis points in mid-December to take overnight borrowing to a six-year low of 7.75 percent and overnight lending to 10 percent.

It has cut rates 16 times and by 7.25 percentage points since Dec. 1, 2000, when it began retreating from a high-rate regime adopted to protect the peso.

Still no CEO for Yuchengco bank

BY ELENA R. TORRIJOS

RIZAL Commercial Banking Corp. has begun the year without a chief executive, as the resignation of Alfonso Yuchengco III has taken effect without the board naming a replacement.

Bank officials refused to comment on their inability to choose a new CEO even though Yuchengco's resignation was announced as early as November.

RCBC chair Rizalino Navarro said earlier the board should announce before the end of last year or in the first few days of this year a development concerning Yuchengco's replacement.

Asked for a comment early last week, Navarro, through a spokesperson, said he had nothing to say at that point.

Yuchengco's resignation was supposed to have taken effect on Nov. 29 but was postponed until the end of last year to give the bank time to tackle the succession issue.

As the issue was being resolved, matters for the chief executive were referred to RCBC corporate vice chair Cesar Virata and RCBC president Valentin Araneta.

Yuchengco cited "personal reasons" for his resignation, although persons familiar with the matter suggested that it was precipitated by a squabble with his elder sisters, Helen and Susan, over his management style.

A major realignment of the family's control of the Yuchengco group of companies seems to have been triggered by the appointment of taipan and family patriarch Alfonso Yuchengco as Philippine ambassador to the United Nations.

Dramatic changes not only in RCBC but also in House of Investments, the flagship holding company of the Yuchengco family, indicate that the reins of the group is being handed back to the younger Yuchengco's elder sisters.

House of Investment last November announced the resignation of Navarro, a former trade secretary, as chair, president and chief executive, Marceo Dy as corporate secretary, and the elder and younger Yuchengco as directors.

Helen Dee was elected as Navarro's replacement.

Court stops claims against Ramcar

THE QUEZON City Regional Trial Court has issued an order stopping all claims against battery maker Ramcar Inc.

In an order issued on Wednesday, the court barred Ramcar's creditors from enforcing claims pending the resolution of cases that would allow the company to restructure its debts.

The order allowed Ramcar to defer payments on its debts as of Dec. 18 last year.

"The issuance of the stay order will allow us to continue normal operations and service our customers both in the domestic and export markets," Ramcar president Roberto Garcia said.

Ramcar has asked its creditors to allow it to restructure P1.8 billion of its P7.9 billion in total obligations over a 10-year period and accept a payment-in-kind arrangement for the remaining P6.2 billion.

Ramcar officials said only such a restructuring program would allow the company to pursue an expansion program that would make it the biggest vehicle battery maker in Asia.

Jess Montemayor, Ramcar chief finance officer, said the proposal was to suspend principal payments for five years and to reduce interest charges on the P1.8 billion in loans.

Ramcar wanted to pay the principal from the sixth to the 10th year and also for the banks not to impose any pre-payment penalty in case the company settles its debts earlier than scheduled.

Ramcar produces 12 brands of vehicle batteries and operates two plants that produce 480,000 units a month. The old plant in Novaliches manufactures 180,000 units of dry-charge batteries monthly.

Extelcom to offer GSM in 6 months

EXPRESS Telecommunications Co. Inc. is set to launch its GSM (global system for mobile communications) service within the first half of the year, according to a person familiar with the matter.

The source said Extelcom's GSM equipment were already in the country, and that the company was already setting these up in various areas.

National Telecommunications Commission division officer Ruben Valeros confirmed this and said the telecommunications company filed its notice of purchase of equipment as early as Sept. 21 last year.

Valeros added that Extelcom was granted 5 megahertz (MHz) of GSM frequency in September so, based on a new NTC directive, the company had to start installing its equipment within six months or risk losing its allocated frequency.

The new notice of frequency supportability "shall be valid for a period of six months within which the applicant shall file its application for permit to purchase. Failure to do so would cause the automatic recall of the frequency supportability and the same shall be made available to other qualified applicants." *Abigail L. Ho*

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Lower oil prices helped ease inflation, says DOE secretary

ENERGY Secretary Vicente Perez Jr. said last week lower fuel prices in the fourth quarter of 2001 helped ease inflation last month.

"We believe that the reduction in fuel prices has substantially contributed to the slower inflation for 2001," Perez said in a statement.

"A moderate inflation is a big factor as the government props up economic activities for this year, especially now that we are laying down the groundwork for the National Power Corp.'s privatization," he said.

On Friday, the National Statistics Office announced that the increase in the prices of consumer goods and services declined to 3.9 percent in December, the lowest in 18 months. It was also a sharp reduction from the 4.4-percent inflation rate for November.

The December figure is the smallest year-on-year rise since June 2000, when inflation also stood at 3.9 percent, the NSO said.

The slowdown in price increases was for all commodity groups, it said, adding that inflation for the full year averaged 6 percent.

December year-on-year inflation for food beverage and tobacco slowed to 2.3 percent from 2.6 percent the previous month. Fuel, electricity and water prices in December rose 6.8 percent on the year compared with 8.4 percent in the year ending in November.

Inflation in the highly urbanized Metro Manila rose to 4.9 percent in December from 4.6 percent in November, ending the year with an average of 7 percent, it said.

But in the largely rural areas outside the capital, inflation fell to 3.5 percent in December from 4.3 percent in November, with an average rate of 5.7 percent for the full year.

Perez said while fuel accounted for only 2 percent of the consumer price index, significant oil price cuts last year compensated for an increase in the prices of other basic commodities.

Petroleum prices were slashed six times from October to December, accounting for a total cut of about P1.84 a liter in gasoline prices and at least P1.50 a liter for diesel. *Ronnel W. Domingo*

Honor SGS debts, gov't urged

THE INFLUENTIAL Makati Business Club has said it will be to the country's interest if it will honor its contract and pay its debts to Societe Generale d'Surveillance.

"We have to be a country that honors contracts, whether it's the government or the private sector," MBC executive director Guillermo Luz said. "Otherwise, it will be difficult for businesspeople to transact business with each other."

Luz said if there was a contract and this contract was held valid, "the government will have to honor it."

"It's a debt for services rendered. It's an unpaid account," he stressed.

The government has acknowledged the debt and has asked SGS for softer payment terms for its obligations amounting to P6.05 billion.

The government wants to pay the amount in installments over a period of several years.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said budget constraints restricted the government from settling the full amount in one payment.

The Swiss import inspection firm initially billed the Philippine government about P6.48 billion for services rendered from September 1998 to March 2000.

After reviewing the amount, however, the task force formed to validate the claims of SGS concluded that the bill should only be P6.05 billion.

The task force recommended that P117.5 million be deducted from the SGS bill and that P314 million in charges be reviewed further.

SGS, according to the finance department, is willing to forego the P314 million provided that an agreement will be forged on the terms of payment for the rest of the obligations.

"To stress the national government's intention to settle its contractual obligations, the DOF has accepted the final report of the task force and is now directing the team to settle the liability. But the settlement is subject to applicable laws including the annual appropriation of Congress," said Camacho.

PMMA gets ₱1.7-B funding

BY DORIS C. DUMLAO

MALACAÑANG has tapped German lender Kreditstanstalt Fur Wiederaufbau (KFw) to co-finance a P1.7-billion project to boost the capacity of state-owned Philippine Merchant Marine Academy to train Filipino seafarers in an era of fast-changing technology and globalization.

In an interview, Presidential Assistant for Education Mona Valisno said the deal was in support of the Macapagal administration's goal to ensure that seafarers from the Philippines—the No. 1 global supplier of maritime manpower with a total share of 20 percent—would remain competitive in terms of competence, skills and discipline.

"The maritime industry is on the top list of the President's priority projects, considering the big role the industry is contributing to the Philippine economy, turning in $2.5 billion every year," Valisno said.

Valisno said the government would provide an P858-million counterpart fund to upgrade PMMA, while KFw agreed to pump in the same amount.

"KFw will make the funds available as soon as forwarding obligations for the soft loan have been given," Valisno said.

The KFw funding is currently being processed as an official development assistance package under the Investment Coordination Committee led by the National Economic and Development Authority.

During a meeting convened to enlist private sector support to enhance the local maritime sector, Valisno said PMMA and another state-owned maritime institution, the National Maritime Polytechnic, also agreed on a resource-sharing scheme to reduce operating costs and come up with high-quality training for global competitiveness.

Valisno said PMMA and NMA agreed to conduct a study on how to make full use of joint resources and submit the results within three weeks before the next consultative meeting on the sector. She estimated that the resource-sharing could slash the operating costs of these institutions by 50 percent. *Doris C. Dumlao*

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• Pinnacle Technologies	365-7583
NORTH EDSA	
• Asianic	927-0365
• Complink	920-9140/920-9141
• Premium Logic	926-2112/926-2148
• NT Computer	927-2570/79
PAMPANGA	
• Benenson Enterprises-Tarlac	(045)982-1685/3920
• PC Basics	(045)892-1658
ILOILO CITY	
• Concept Computer (MaryMart)	(033)335-0753
• Concept Computer (SM City)	(033)320-6610
• Iloilo Computer	(033)337-7820/320-7740
MAKATI	
• Asianic	893-0408
ALABANG	
• Datacore Computer System	842-1021/842-3190
• PC Express	722-2282/84
BULACAN	
• Pinnacle Computer	(044)791-2038
DUMAGUETE	
• Informatx Computer System	(035)225-4716
LEGASPI	
• All Electronics	(052)480-6011/480-6512
DAVAO CITY	
• Samtlink System, Inc.	(082)221-3456
DAGUPAN	
• Bristop Computer	(075)522-0092/93
NAGA	
• All Electronics	(054)811-3825/473-2214
• Bristop Computer	(054)433-8646
BACOLOD	
• IECC	(034)433-9472/434-3249
TACLOBAN	
• Electrocomputer Data	(053)325-5904/321-3504
CAGAYAN DE ORO	
• Dataworld Computer	(088)857-2871
ILAGAN	
• Datavision	(063)221-2973
SANTIAGO CITY	
• Globestar Computer	(078)682-7347/682-3251
CEBU	
• Accent-Micro Products	(032)232-0461-62

* Prices may vary in provincial areas

People, Events & Products

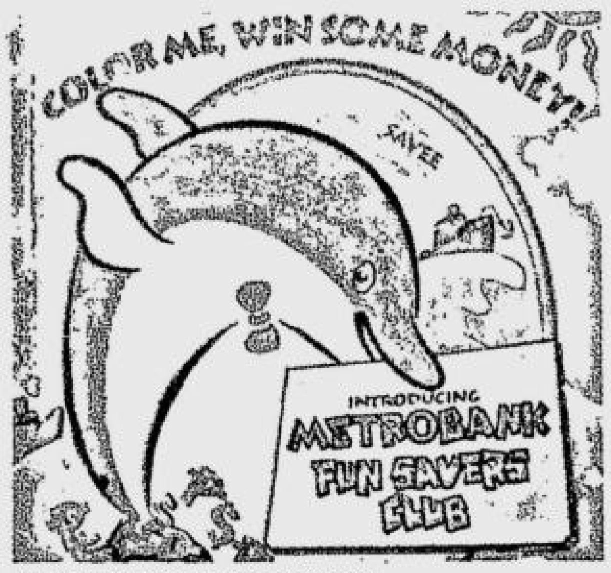
Aries B. Espinosa, Editor
aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Metrobank Fun Savers Club winners announced

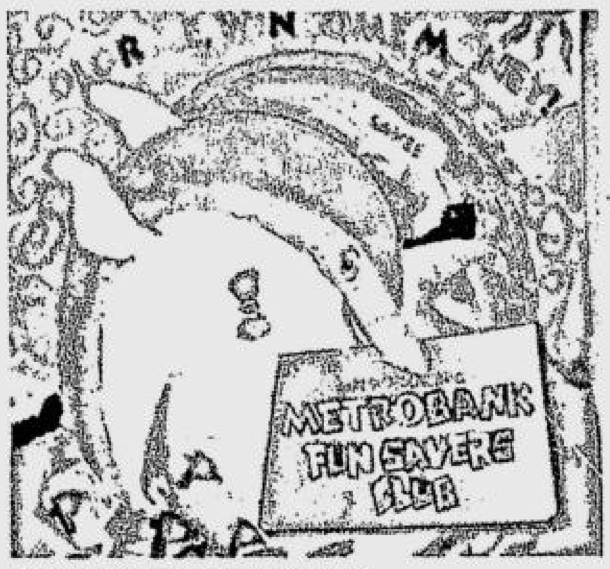
METROBANK, the country's largest bank, recently announced the names of the ten winners of its Fun Savers Club's "Color Me, Win Some Money" coloring contest. The winners are 7-year-old Bryan Mendel Daliwan; 8-year-old Jan Leor Quioge and Karmella Morano; 9-year-old Roxxy Rafael, Chinhe Ferrer Macababat and Jessica Lourdes Jaro; and 10-year-old Rez Dupa, Saymel Calaon, Marc Gabriel An and Mark Alvin Fial.

Each of the 10 winners received a P2000 Fun Savers Club savings account. The winners' works were adjudged the best among close to a thousand entries submitted. The board of judges was composed of Metrobank Foundation Young Painters' Annual winner and noted artist Elmer Borlongan, Aspac Advertising art director Robin Latonio and Metrobank product manager Wilfredo Daleon.

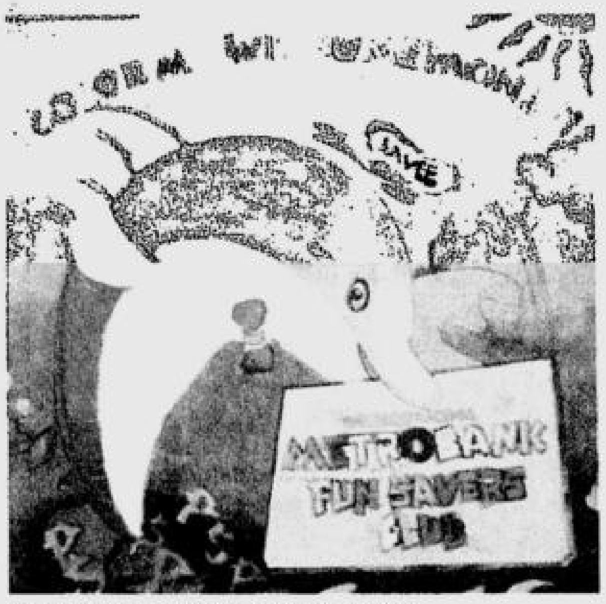
The contest was open to children aged seven to 10 years.



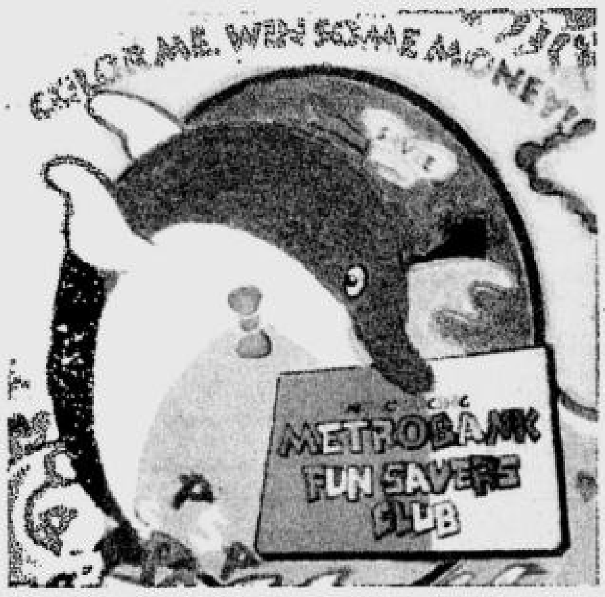
By Marc Gabriel An, 10 years old



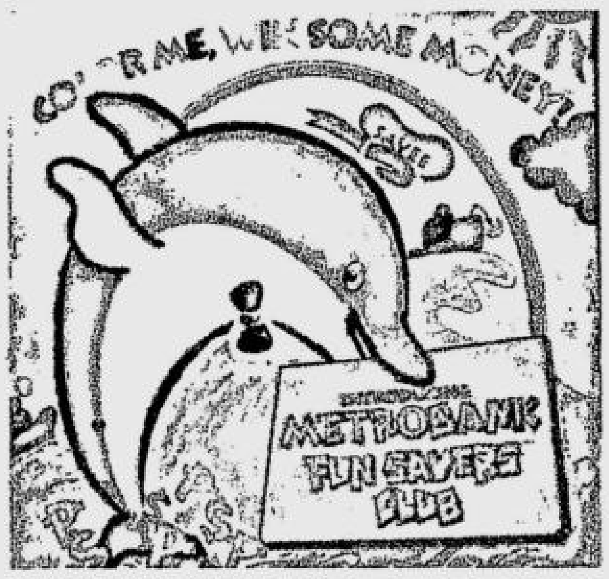
By Karmella Morano, 8 years old



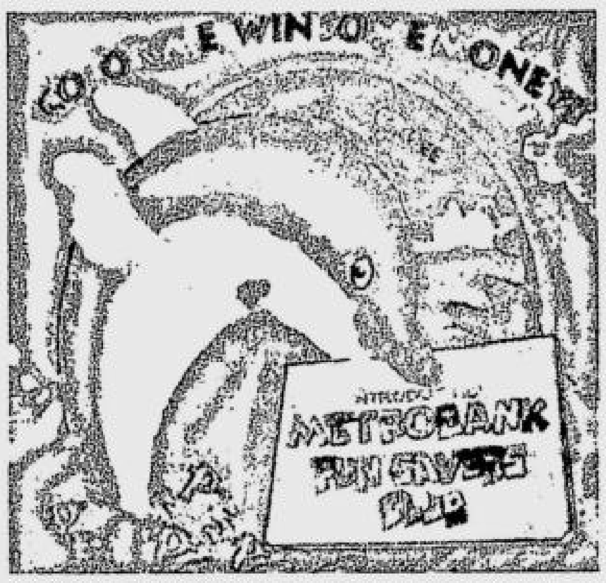
By Jessica Lourdes Jaro, 9 years old



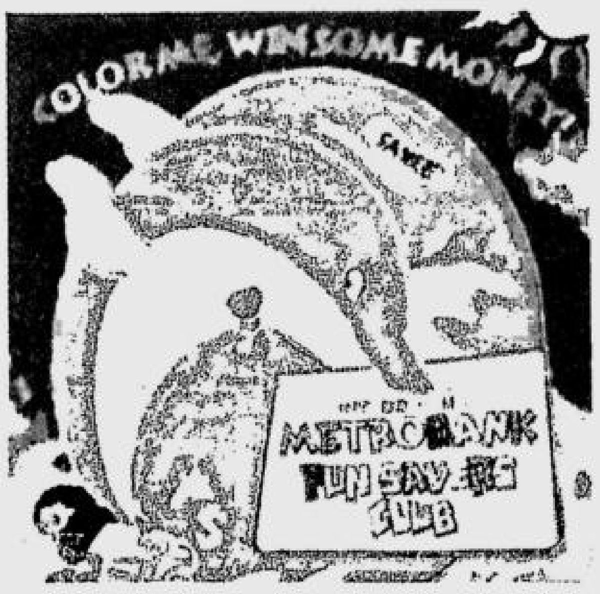
By Rez Dupa, 10 years old



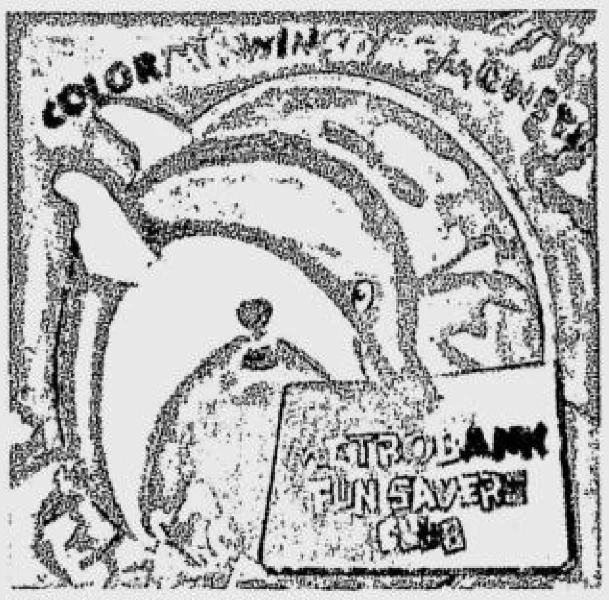
By Roxxy Rafael, 9 years old



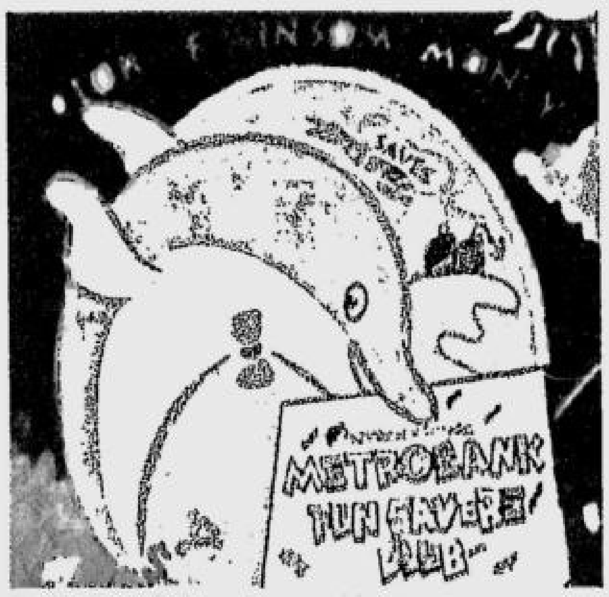
By Chinhe Ferrer Macababat, 9 years old



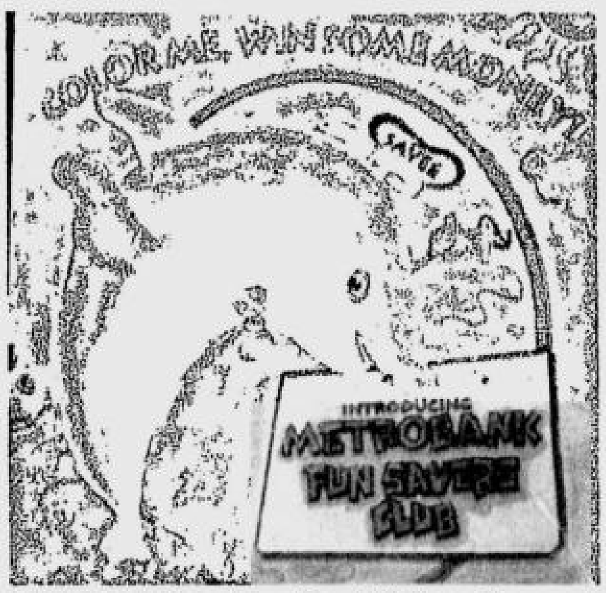
By Saymel Calaon, 10 years old



By Mark Alvin Fial, 10 years old



By Jan Leor Quioge, 8 years old



By youngest winner Bryan Mendel Daliwan, 7 years old

SOROPTIMIST FASHION SHOW FOR A CAUSE

Soroptimist International Founder Manila highlighted its Coral Anniversary celebration with a Filipiniana fashion show and dinner dance recently at the Manila Polo Club in Makati City, with Club Soroptimists from the Metro Manila Northwest Director participating as models. Proceeds of this affair will fund SI Founder Manila's projects in its adopted barangay 891 of Sta. Ana, which include a day-care center and programs on health, livelihood and environment. Leading the Soroptimist models in the fashion show was Club president Cora Cadeliña, with the special participation of district director for SI Northwest Metro Manila Margie Vitug; district treasurer Cora Gernale and SI Manila Tourist Belt president Lita Escueta; SI Valenzuela president Adel Gunigundo; SI Malabon president Flery Marcelo and Odette Tiu; SI Silang past president Dahlia Toledo; SI Navotas president Viring Teaño; past district director Dulce Gozum; SI Antipolo president Ditas Posadas and past president SI Meycauayan Linabelle Villarica; SI Founder Manila officers and members Baby Pizarro, Yolly Aguilar, Minda Garcia, Ampy Araullo, Arabelle Poblete, Mary Jazul, Sol Alturas Yu, Nida Raguid, Melanie Lacuna, Cristie Lee and Espie Ignacio. In charge of the affair were Baby Pizarro, Minda Garcia and Cora Manimbo with music provided by Gloria Gatmaitan and her band, TV newscaster Cristina Pecson was master of ceremonies.

MRT 3 EXTERNAL ESCALATORS

Department of Transportation and Communications Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez (third from left) and Metro Rail Transit Corp. chair and CEO Robert John L. Sobrepeña (fourth from right) cut the ceremonial ribbon marking the opening of the Ayala Station external escalators. Similar external escalators are currently being installed at 11 MRT stations and are expected to be completed by January 2002. Looking on are (from left) general manager John Free, Jardine Schindler Elevator Corp.; chair Ruben L. Umali, R.L. Umali Construction Corp.; president Christopher Gotanco, Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.; COO Randolph Edward, R.L. Umali Construction Corp.; and sales manager Joseph Cachola, Jardine Schindler Elevator, Corp.

BPI 'top in financial soundness,' HK magazine says

ONCE again, the Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI) has been adjudged "most financially sound" among corporations operating in the country.

For the eighth consecutive year now, Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER) ranks BPI fourth in overall standing but first in financial soundness, a category that counts most in the banking industry.

In its December 2001 issue, FEER also deems the bank, a financial institution under the Ayala Group, fourth in long-term vision as well and fifth in companies others try to emulate.

Two other companies belonging to the Ayala Group made it to the list of the top 10: Ayala Corp., which emerged second, and Globe Telecom, which ran away with the sixth slot. The only other bank included in the list is Metropolitan Bank and Trust.

A financial magazine based in Hong Kong, FEER conducts a survey of top corporations in all Asian countries including the Philippines. It then publishes the results at the end of the year.

FEER seeks the opinions of business executives, investment experts, government policy makers and financial analysts. Its purpose is to rank corporations in the following categories: quality of services or products, innovativeness in responding to customer needs, long-term vision, financial soundness and companies others try to emulate.

The corporations and the categories under which they emerged as leaders were San Miguel Corp., for high quality services/products, Jollibee Foods, for innovativeness in responding to customer needs; Ayala Corp., for long-term vision; Bank of the Philippine Islands, for financial soundness; and Jollibee Foods, for companies that others try to emulate.

In descending order; the overall ranking of the 10 best corporations is as follows: Jollibee Foods, Ayala Corp., San Miguel, BPI, ABS-CBN, Globe Telecom, Mercury Drug, SM Prime Holdings, Smart Communications, and Metropolitan Bank and Trust.

Burlington: partner of international exhibition

BURLINGTON Industries Phils. (BIP) Inc., maker of Burlington, Puma and Bally socks, recently signed up as official partner of the "Portraits of the World" museo-exhibit at Festival Supermall in Filinvest-Alabang.

The 100-percent fun-filled exhibition featured the traditions of different nations and the magic of Christmas around the world.

"We want our countrymen, especially the students, to discover priceless wealth of knowledge in this unique learning experience," stressed Rudy Tan, general manager of Burlington.

"As a responsible corporate citizen, Burlington will support worthy endeavors such as the staging of 'Portraits of the World' here in Metro Manila," added Tan.

Bits Clips

UK lessons in privatization

THE EMBASSY of the United Kingdom and the Jose B. Fernandez Centre for Banking and Finance, W. Sycip Policy Centre of the Asian Institute of Management will be hosting Harry Bush CB for a two-day visit to Manila today and Jan. 8. He will be sharing the United Kingdom's experience of privatization in a discussion with Undersecretary Cyril del Callar of the Department of Energy and professor Felixberto Bustos, former executive officer of the Asset Privatization Trust, today at the AIM Policy Centre. Bush is a Treasury Director and Head of the Enterprise and Growth Unit of Her Majesty's Treasury. The Philippine government will be privatizing its electricity transmission and generation assets this January.

Prestone raffle deadline set

PRESTONE, the number one brand in the brake fluid industry, is announcing the deadline for the submission of entries for their promo ''Basta Prestone Lovers, Lucky Winners'' on Jan. 15. The five winners for each raffle will be picked from the following regions: NCR, North Luzon, South Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. Winners will be notified about the details where they can claim their prizes. The grand raffle will be on Jan. 31 at the Cipi Bicutan Plant.

Villena topbills confab

ANTONIO Ma. ''Tony'' Villena is the plenary speaker for Philam Plans' upcoming business conference at the Westin Philippine Plaza from Jan. 15 to 16. Villena will be joined by other noted speakers Jose Angelico Gonzales, Silvia Alzona, and Philamlife's agency manager and Gama management awardee Lourdes del Mundo and EVP and Philam chief marketing officer Jesus Alfonso Hofileña.

DTI sees no growth in exports this year

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry expects exports to remain flat this year because it doubts whether that the country's biggest overseas markets—the US and Japan—would indeed recover by the second half this year.

Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel Roxas II said that he was skeptical on forecasts of a second-half recovery for the recession-stricken US and Japan economies.

The United States and Japan account for 27 percent and 13 percent, respectively, of the country's total exports. Roxas said that unless these markets recover their footing and make a rebound, the country has to be content with a flat export growth this year.

Roxas was among the first government officials to forecast a 15-percent decline in exports to $32.3 billion last year. The government had originally projected exports to remain flat at $38 billion in 2001.

From January to November last year, exports have fallen by 14.7 percent to $39.5 billion. The steep 20.7-percent drop in exports in November surprised analysts as they expected the fallout from the Sept. 11 attacks to have already bottomed out in October.

The Philippines is particularly vulnerable to a recession in the US and Japan economies because a substantial chunk of its exports is directly or indirectly shipped to these countries.

Electronic products and semiconductors account for more than 60 percent of all export receipts. While not all of these products are shipped to the United States and Japan, the electronic products and semiconductors shipped to other countries such as Taiwan are ultimately sold to either Japan and the United States.

Group to revive Amari project

By Doris C. Dumlao

AMARI coastal bay developer Cyber Bay Corp., formerly Centennial City Inc., is set to revive this year its 750-hectare reclamation project along the Manila coastal bay area. It intends to start pre-selling the project next year when the real estate sector is seen to start its rebound.

In a recent report, Cyber Bay said it had shortlisted four bidders for the contract covering dredging and reclamation works in the area.

The awarding of the contracts covering various aspects of the project was earlier scheduled for last year but was deferred to the first quarter of this year. The actual development of the area is scheduled to start by the third quarter of the year.

With the entry of a new group into Cyber Bay, the company has prioritized a capital-raising program to finally jumpstart the much-delayed project.

The project, the centerpiece of the Coastal Bay waterfront development, grabbed the limelight at the height of the Philippine Estates Authority (PEA)-Amari bribery scandal during the Ramos administration.

The Ital-Thai group used to control the majority of the Coastal Bay project under the controversial joint venture with state-controlled PEA, but found its stakes diluted from 70 percent to 30 percent (20 percent for Amari Coastal Bay Development Corp. and 10 percent for Ital-Thai) after the entry of a new group led by businessman Ramon Ang, the right-hand man of businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco.

Ital-Thai Development Corp. Ltd., the largest infrastructure construction company in Thailand and one of the biggest civil engineering contractors in Southeast Asia, has a local subsidiary called Ital-Thai International which was originally contracted to develop the reclamation area during the Ramos regime.

But the succeeding Estrada administration felt that the government did not get a good deal out of the PEA-Amari project and ordered a renegotiation of the contract, which later on led to the dilution of the Ital-Thai group from the project.

Cyber Bay is now a unit of Prime Orion Philippines Inc., formerly Guoco Holdings Inc. Once completed, it is expected to attract at least P200 billion in fresh investments for the Philippines.

Deutsche Bank sees . . .

(From page B3)

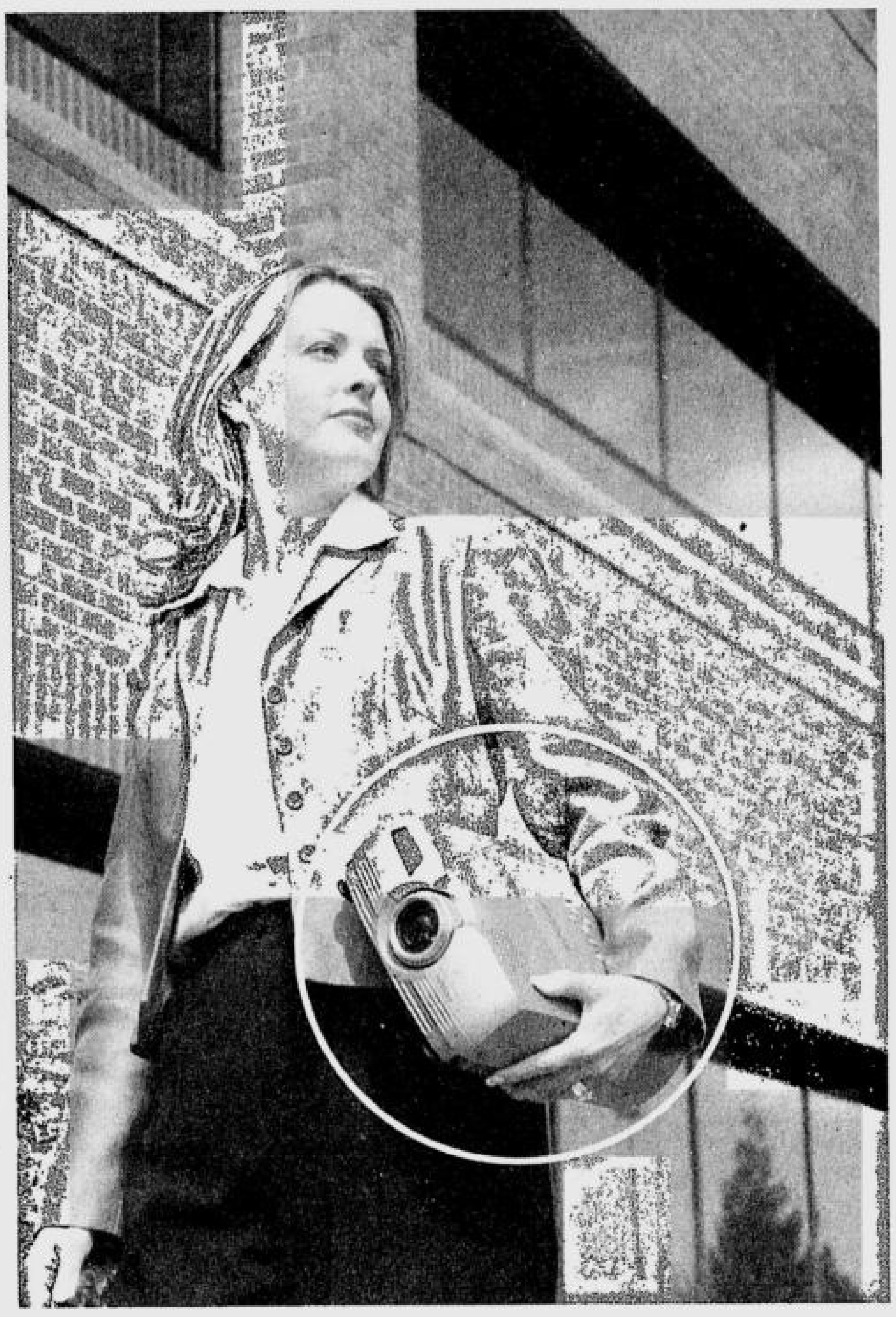
dollar reserves could hit an all-time high of $16.8 billion, and GDP growth would likely reach 4.5 percent.

Deutsche had projected in November last year that the peso might hit 55 to $1 this year as a consequence of "competitive devaluation" given what it saw then as an extended weakness in Philippine exports.

The peso, contrary to Deutsche's expectations that it could dip to 52.50 to $1 in 2001, had proven resilient and stayed below the 52 level late last year, making it one of the best-performing currencies in Asia when it only shed about 3 percent in value compared with the previous year's decline of almost 20 percent.

Deutsche Bank said Philippine exports were heavily skewed toward consumer electronics and most of which were shipped to the United States.

"In fact, the Philippines is the second most reliant on electronics exports and the second most exposed to the US in the Asian region. While this exposure has had a negative effect in 2001, a recovery in demand for electronics in 2002 should assist an export recovery," it said.



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INFOTECH

LEO MAGNO, Editor

2002: The way IT will be

BY LEO MAGNO

THE INFORMATION technology market for 2002 will be anything but predictable, owing to various industry and global economic developments in 2001. Not a few IT companies felt the crunch last year, leading to organizational downsizing, human resource attrition, mergers and acquisitions. Not to mention the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York which placed the proud United States in a state of panic, serving as an epilogue to a recession reached just before the year 2001 closed.

Those who make predictions in an unpredictable and rapid-moving industry such as the IT industry are basically digging their own graves in a cemetery of critics ready to pounce on them once their predictions turn bust. That's why there are grave diggers and non-grave diggers in the local IT scene.

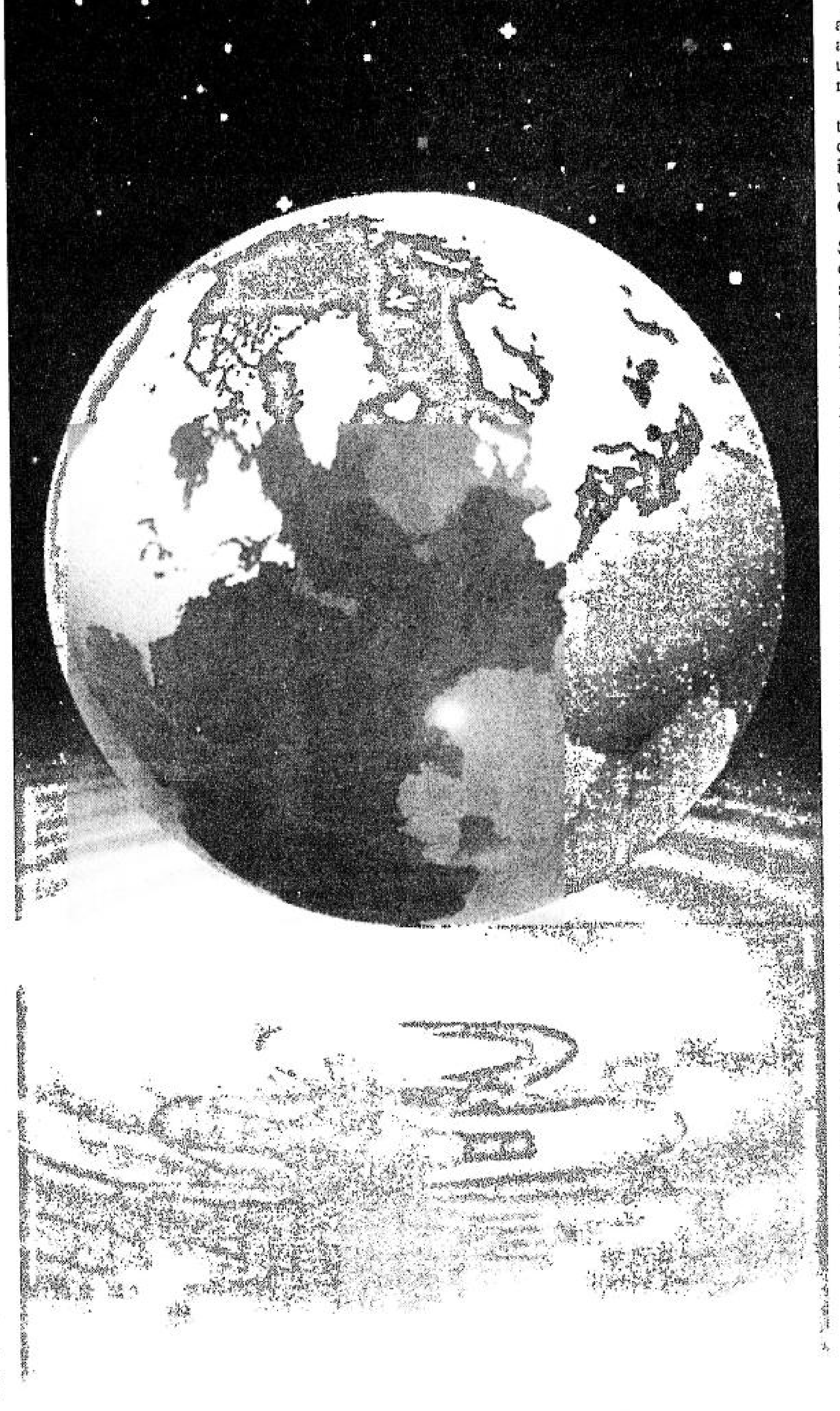
The year 2001 saw Arthur Clarke's vision of commercial lunar travel become blurred when his classic "2001: A Space Odyssey" proved to still be confined to the realms of fiction. George Orwell, as we all know, also missed by several decades when "1984" turned out to be way too early for its time. Ditto the television series "Space: 1999."

The year 2002 is exactly a decade from the year when two other fictional pieces proved to be prophetic for the IT industry. In 1992, the movie "Sneakers" was released by Universal Studios, and Alvin and Heidi Toffler released the book "War and Anti-war." These two struck a chord in me a decade ago when, being a wet-behind-the-ears IT reporter for the Metropolitan Computer Times, I finally found mass media talking about how important technology-based or -facilitated information would be—that data or information in general can be used for economic, cultural and social advantage while it can also be used for something as damaging as war.

"There's a war out there, Marty," Ben Kingsley told the character played by Robert Redford in the movie "Sneakers." "It's not a war about weapons. It's all about the information."

The Toffler couple agree in their 1992 book "War and Anti-war," stating that fast access to information (i.e., processed data as delivered by networked computer systems) can be used both as a weapon in the battle for economic and cultural influence, and, paradoxically, as a deterrent for such economic and cultural invasion.

Ten years later and here we are, ready to listen anew to grave diggers, as it were. Infotech found such brave souls in the IT industry to summarize what happened in 2001 and make predictions for 2002. The IT industry leaders themselves speak in this article, with words coming from people talking about something in their own respective backyards. We have culled here words from officials of Apple Philippines, Compaq Computer Philippines, data storage company EMC Corp., disaster recovery solutions provider Veritas Software, domain name registrar DotPH, Hitachi Data Systems and uninterruptible power supply system provider MGE UPS Systems.



Allan Tan, Hitachi Data Systems country manager

2001: In 2001, there were brief periods of excitement but most of the time, you had this atmosphere of paranoia as businesses tried to anticipate what the market would do. A great deal of the time, the markets were not driven by economics or business sense but by sentiment. Cost-cutting measures were the norm in 2001. I don't expect this to disappear altogether in 2002.

2002: What will happen is that companies will realize that there needs to be an intelligent reasoning behind the cost-cutting model. Companies will need to implement a strategy for growth not by shrinking their operations but by growing their business where it makes sense.

There are two camps out there. Economists who are predicting a gloomy scenario of slow economic growth, and analysts who are largely more optimistic. I'd like to believe that there is a positive spin in any situation. Certainly the demise of many dotcom businesses in 2000 put a damper on economic and business development in 2001. Personally, I believe the market is set to improve in 2002 given that many of our customers are preparing for the expected growth coming by the middle of the year.

Job cuts, mergers and acquisitions, consolidation, decentralization—these are terms associated with any business that is growing. There will always be job cuts as demand shifts from one business unit to another. The thing that needs to be addressed adequately is the opportunity to train existing staff to be productive in the new environment.

Different companies need to apply different ways to survive, stay competitive and to grow. The only real generalization that can be taken across the board is that productivity levels need to be kept high. This can be achieved through a combination of regular staff training, deploying appropriate technologies to increase productivity, leverage the right skills within the company (and hire new ones where it makes business sense), and find synergies with other businesses.

It is important to stress that focusing on core businesses will remain a key strategy for many companies.

No one can accurately predict what the future will bring. Change is occurring too fast and too frequently that sometimes it is easier to plan for the short-term. But I believe in planning for the long-haul, so I personally plan at least 12 months in advance. You always have a "Plan B" or even a "Plan C" in the event that "Plan A" doesn't pan out the way you hoped it would. I don't like surprises.

On 2002 technology trends: The arrival of the Treo from Handspring will give rise to a new productivity tool that realizes seamless integration of the mobile phone with a personal digital assistant.

Within the enterprise, we have seen a movement away from the server as the center of the universe to the data (or information). We will see faster and better price/performance from servers and data-stores will dwarf the servers within the data centers. As this happens, companies will realize that they need to implement a better way of architecting their infrastructure. Data networking will become central to this architecture, and the management of this data network will become the central preoccupation of the IT department.

Veritas Software

2001: Veritas Software for the past year has secured a strong market position in the Philippines, owing to the depth and breadth of Veritas Software's data protection solutions and the continuance of the desktop-to-data center support strategy, along with broad software support for the hardware products of leading vendors and the advancement of innovative alternative backup technologies. These efforts, plus the valuable assistance provided by our local channels, enabled us to maintain our market leadership.

2002: The following year will see more and more companies realizing the importance of storage and data protection as they are faced with an escalating amount of data that need to be managed and protected.

This is why Veritas' goal in the Philippines would be to extend a strong sales force and network of resellers and OEM (original equipment manufacturer) partners to provide heterogeneous data availability software for customers to gain optimal interoperability, performance and manageability of data and applications in heterogeneous operating environments.

Christian Bertrand, MGE UPS Systems managing director

2001: MGE Philippines had quite a good year and achieved its key targets. A major development in the market has been the emergence of Internet backbone- and hosting-related projects in the Philippines. The magnitude of these projects has been much bigger than the previous years when buyers were mostly dotcoms. All in all, I would say that 2001 has been favorable to us and that all MGE departments performed well for the benefit of our global results.

2002: It is really difficult to (give projections for 2002) after the Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the major downturn we have seen in the market worldwide. How will the Philippnes be affected? It is difficult to foresee. So, the outlook could be not that bright, but not that dark also.

The market will be what it will be and we'll try to optimize our performance on what the market dictates.

Nevertheless, I'm confident. Not because I believe the market is gonna grow—it perhaps will not—but because I know for a fact that our structure is now flexible enough to still achieve acceptable results in a very tough environment. In case of rainy or stormy days, our team will enjoy the benefits of what has been implemented and achieved since 1998, being able to bend without breaking.

Charlie Tang, Apple Philippines country manager

2001: I must admit we've had a good year. We've had several significant events like the launching of the power Mac OSX. Of course we've also introduced the innovative and stylish iBook, also known as the "icebook." These two products have been received really warmly and we're really happy about that.

For 2001, we were also the first to introduce the superdrive for the PowerMacG4 which is capable of DVD authoring. We expect a lot more interest and renewed excitement for our products since we've opened the new AppleCenter in GreenBelt.

This center is patterned after all the Apple Stores opened internationally where customers can come in and find anything and everything to satisfy their Mac cravings and more. The displays are also customer friendly so that they can interact freely with the items and so before buying anything, they can get a better feel of what they're getting in to.

Of course there's also the iPod which we recently launched. I expect that it will just be as warmly accepted as the rest of our products.

All in all, we've had a good year despite the economic trials and I think that at the very least, next year will be just the same, if not better.

2002: For 2002 I see an even more positive environment for at least where Apple is concerned. I see our products will continue to gain market share and continue to come up with innovative products and will steadily be known as a technology leader. Right now, biases aside, our products are really cutting-edge and so far unsurpassed by competitors, and for the whole of 2002, we will be concentrating on gaining more mindshare as such.

All our activities for the last months of 2001 promise to be fruitful for 2002. I guess you can say we've been planting seeds that we can watch grow by next year.

As for 2002 in general, I feel uncertain as to how the market will respond in the first quarter as the economic situation is pretty much vague now. But I am confident that it will start picking up by the second quarter especially for technological/lifestyle products. I think that I can safely say that there will be more innovations and new products for next year as the market will be looking for more ways to make life easier for them.

Joel Disini, DotPH CEO

2001: (The company's most significant achievement in 2001) was staying profitable. Besides the global economic crisis, the domain industry has been reeling from 1) the introduction of new gTLD domains (e.g., .biz, .info, .name, etc.) and 2) downward spiraling prices. The segment which had the most significant growth was international sales.

Recessions are always a good time to cut costs, and we've cut costs dramatically by trimming a lot of fat. We've also automated a lot of our operations (including our registration process) and that's helped tremendously. We also introduced new products—five-year and 10-year domain registrations, as well as mail-forwarding, which allows domain owners to switch ISPs without having to coordinate with their ISPs so that their mail and Web services are interrupted.

Sales have definitely gone down. But adversity is good. It allows one to make an organization leaner and more efficient. This will serve us well when the good times come.

2002: The year 2002, we believe, will be a unique year for DotPH. The release of new global domains has opened the market for "alternatives to .com." We believe there is a unique opportunity for a few domains to be perceived as a world-class alternative to .com.

Furthermore, because of the lowered cost of international calls, international bandwidth and the availability of world-class call centers, it makes sense for dotcom companies to locate their customer support operations in the Philippines. DotPH hopes to be the domain registry that gives the best service anywhere in the world.

(To counter the negative effects of 2001, in 2002, DotPH will use more) innovation. (We will) develop technology that pushes the bounds of what domains can do, making them more useful and more a part of everyday life—not just on the Net.

Nilo S. Cruz, Compaq Philippines president and managing director

In spite of the crucial developments that have unfolded this year, Compaq has persisted in bringing "inspiration technology" to the market.

We have taken several steps to our ultimate goal of bridging the digital divide in our country, through strategic projects and strong alliances. We are proud to have introduced to the market revolutionary and innovative products that continue to stir one's creativity and productivity.

We are likewise proud of Compaq's involvement in the Department of Trade and Industry's and Department of Education's PCs for Public Schools project where we believe we can contribute extensively to the government's thrust of uplifting the country's educational system.

As Trade Secretary Mar Roxas announced that the grass roots-based "Personal Computers for Public High Schools (PCs for PS)" has entered the "roll-out phase" with DTI offices all over Luzon now, distributing personal comput-

2002/ p.B9

Technology for Baby Natasha in 2002

BY ERWIN LEMUEL G. OLIVA

CIRCA 2002: Baby Natasha sleeps peacefully until a thud awakens her.

"Not again," mom—who was just in between waking up and sleeping—complains. She looks at the satellite radio sitting comfortably on top of the bedside table. The radio's digital display indicates that it was 4:01 a.m.

"Lights," she blurts. Then the bedroom's light goes off, giving the country-style bedroom a soft glow of orange.

She turns to her husband, who was fast asleep, and shakes him hard.

"Wake up. Look at your baby at the webcam. I think she's hungry. Or maybe . . . hmmm . . . zoom in."

A tiny display sitting beside the satellite radio zooms in and shows a close-up of Natasha's diaper.

"She's wet. She must have unloaded all six ounces of milk she drank last night," mom says with a yawn.

"Check if we still have enough supply of diaper," dad says dismissively to mom.

"Okay. How much diaper is left?" she barks toward the direction of the satellite radio. A few seconds pass, then a woman's voice replies: "You still have enough to last a week."

Mom gets up and heads for the baby's bedroom, which was 15 paces south of the master bedroom.

"Lights . . . radio . . . eggs," she says while walking.

The hallway's lights go off at the instant the words come out of her mouth. Then a few nanoseconds later, the large speaker down in the living room gives off a soothing music.

"Only two eggs are left," a woman's voice emanates from hidden speakers in the house.

"Oh gosh, I forgot to order some eggs for breakfast. I'll do that later," mom mumbles, thinking of ordering online.

As she approaches Natasha's room, she gives another set of orders. In an instant, the baby stops crying as colorful holograms begin hovering over her crib which was now softly rocking.

"There now, what's up my darling?" The baby turns toward her, and smiles.

"That's my girl," mom says, reaching for a diaper in a dispenser hanging on the wall. The diaper dispenser's digital display indicates that there were 15 diapers left.

"Okay. I hope this would calm you, baby," she whispers. She reaches for her bottled milk encased in a vacuum glass container. The digital display indicates that the temperature was just right to keep the milk from spoiling.

She presses a few buttons in the vacuum glass container. The temperature begins to increase slowly.

"Dad," she says. A little digital display on the wall turns on. It shows dad still fast asleep.

"Off," the display dims, then fades to black.

Time flies. Natasha is now fast asleep (the slow rocking of the crib and the MP3 music emanating from behind the pillow keep it that way for the next two hours).

While taking a few sips from her home-brewed coffee (well, thanks to her traditional coffee maker) mom reaches for her personal digital assistant lying on the kitchen table. It shows that she had a 9 a.m. meeting, and there were 200 e-mail messages, 10 voice messages, and 3 video messages, which came from her relatives vacationing in the Northern regions of Alaska.

"I wonder what Alaska looks at this time of the year," she says, as she points her stylus to one of the video messages.

As the PDA began showing autumn in Alaska, she remembers that she needed to order some eggs from the supermarket. She opens her browser, and out pops Netscape Navigator.

"Let's see. Fifty pesos a dozen. That's expensive. Hmm . . . let's see another one."

She opens another browser window and goes into www.yahoo.com, then types, "medium eggs" then out comes a list of shopping centers.

"I'll take this one," she points her stylus on her PDA screen.

Suddenly, her PDA gives off a loud ring. The screen indicates that the call is coming from the office. She puts on the wireless headset.

"Hello? Yes. Yes. Yes. I'll be there. Okay. I'll send you an e-mail in a while."

"Open e-mail, send office file number 322. Address: erlem2000@yahoo.com. Okay."

From the baby's bedroom, mom once again hears a faint cry. The baby was up again. She goes to her PDA's address book, makes a search on the Internet for "babysitters" and finds one available for the week. She fills in a few forms, sends it, then waits for confirmation. Hours later, she gets a call at her office.

"Missus, the baby is having trouble sleeping. What should I do?" the voice from the end of the line says.

"Give me a few minutes, okay. I will set up a teleconference. I want to see the baby. Bring her near the webcam," she tells the babysitter.

In a few minutes, she shifts her attention to the computer screen, puts on the wireless headset and opens a browser. Seconds pass, then gradually the screen shows streaming video of the babysitter and baby Natasha in the bedroom.

"I see. Is she becoming restless?"

The babysitter nods.

"Okay. Get the breast milk in the freezer, and place it in that glass container near the crib. That would do the trick."

A few minutes later, she receives an SMS (short message or text service) on her cell phone that says: "Baby asleep."

"Thank God," she tells herself. "Thank God for this technology."

2002: The way IT will be

(From page B8)

ers to preselected public high schools, in coordination with the education department and various school districts.

Roxas himself had shepherded the negotiations with the government of Japan for a P600-million grant for the purchase and distribution of 20,000 computers to 1,000 non-science public high schools.

Whatever lies ahead for Compaq, we will continue to provide best-in-class products, solutions and services that will always ignite inspiration.

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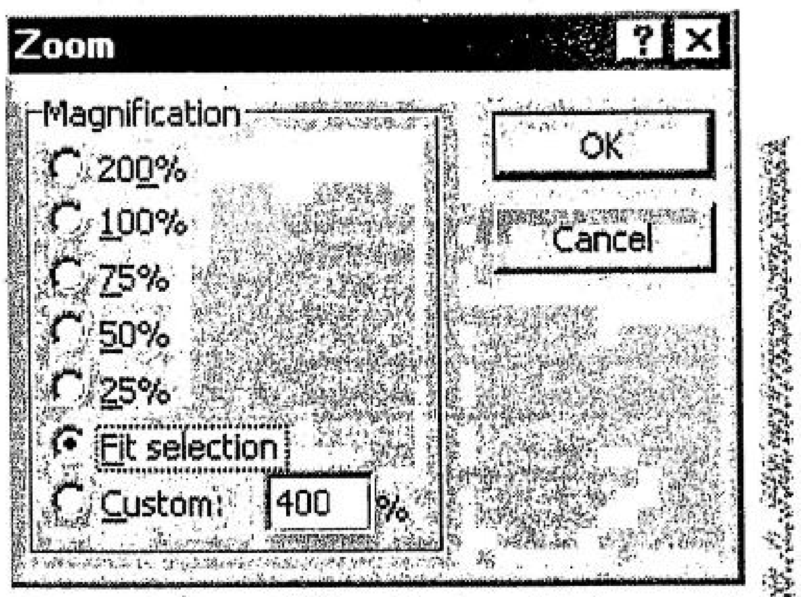
2001: EMC continued to gain market share globally in 2001 in terms of software, which is the most significant growth area and a new direction for EMC. EMC's software business is growing faster than any other segment of our business.

EMC successfully focused on international expansion through contribution of international revenues which increased from about 30 percent in 1999 to about 40 percent in the first half of the year. EMC also expanded geographically with more offices and recruitment in India, China, Taiwan, South America and Europe. In Asia Pacific, we now have about 35 offices in 12 countries. Furthermore, strong growth in the first half of the year with Asia Pacific and Japan being the fastest growing market. China is a significant growth driver in Asia Pacific.

2002: EMC will continue to focus on international expansion. The goal is to make it a 50/50 split in the near term. In the next few years, EMC plans to alter the revenue mix as follows: Software from 23 percent to 30 percent; hardware revenues from 66 percent to about 50 percent; services revenue from 11 percent to about 20 percent.

EMC will also continue to extend its technology leadership through R and D. EMC is increasingly becoming more of a software company than a hardware company.

In August 2001, we announced a new era in storage technology—automated information storage. This is about being able to manage and protect information storage on heterogeneous storage platforms using intuitive and intelligent software tools that reside on the storage system.



Zoom

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- ○ 75%
- ○ 50%
- ○ 25%
- ● Fit selection
- ○ Custom: 400 %

SOMETIMES, when working on an Excel spreadsheet, you want to zoom in on selected cells. Here's a tip on how to do it.

Selective zooming in MS Excel

BY JERRY LIAO

POWERTIPS

DID you know that you can zoom in only on selected cells rather than the entire sheet in Microsoft Excel? This is how we do it:

(1) Open your worksheet in Microsoft Excel.

(2) Select the range you want to enlarge.

(3) Choose "View," then "Zoom" then click on the "Fit Selection" option.

(4) Microsoft Excel will automatically choose the right percentage in order for you to view the selected cells in a size which is as large as possible.

(5) When you're done, select "100 percent" from the "Zoom control" option in the Toolbar.

For more tips, visit www.brainshare.com.ph. We would like to invite our readers to join The Powertips Group. Register online at www.brainshare.com.ph/register.htm and receive free tips via e-mail. For comments, questions and suggestions, send your email to infochat@mozcom.com.

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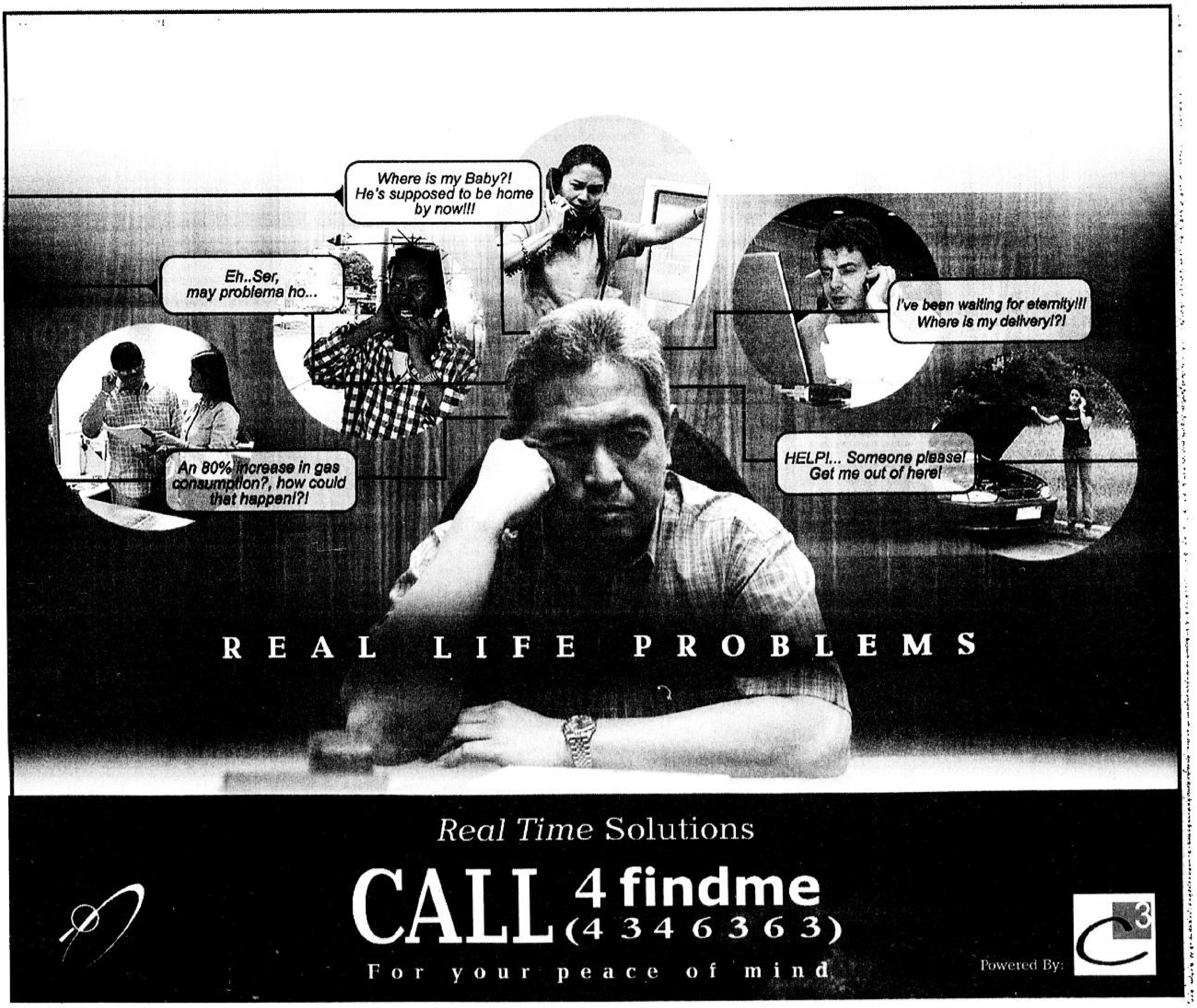

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Armed Forces of the Philippines invites all manufacturers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the ***SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF HF/SSB TRANSCEIVER, 20 WATTS, MANPACK CONFIGURATION, with an approved budget of Four Hundred Twenty Seven Million, Four Hundred Thirty Two Thousand, Three Hundred Twenty Pesos (Php 427,432,320.00) under the AFP Modernization Program.***

Only bids from entities which make, develop, fabricate, assemble, build or otherwise produce said equipment shall be entertained.

Bid documents will be available for issuance starting **January 8, 2002** during office hours at the BAC Secretariat, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Capability, Materiel and Technology Development, J9, AFP, 3rd Floor, Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City upon payment of ***Forty Thousand Pesos (Php 40,000.00)*** which is not refundable. The form of payment will be in cash or cashier's check.

A Special Power of Attorney, issued by the prospective bidder authorizing its representative to purchase the bid documents in its behalf, shall be required before issuance of the bid documents.

A Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled on ***January 23, 2002 at 1:00 p.m.*** *(local time) at the Silid Panday Pira, OJ9, 1st Floor Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City.* Bidders are required to submit their queries in writing to the BAC Secretariat prior to the Pre-Bid Conference.

Deadline for submission of applications for eligibility statements and the bid envelopes is on ***February 21, 2002 at 9:00 a.m.*** *(local time) and followed by the Opening of Bids at* ***10:00 a.m.*** *at the Silid Panday Pira, OJ9, 1st Floor, Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City.*

The Armed Forces of the Philippines reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive deficiencies embodied therein without assuming any obligation whatsoever for any expenses or losses that may be incurred by the bidder in the preparation of the bid.

(Sgd.) **NARCISO L. ABAYA**
Major General AFP
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(PDI - Jan. 7 & 8, 2002)

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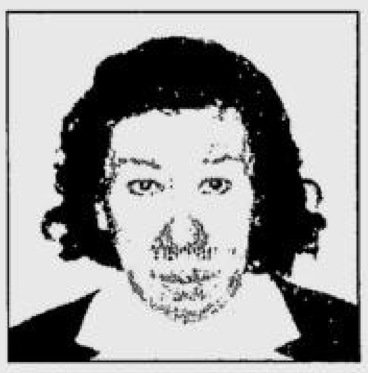

THE PUBLIC IS HEREBY NOTIFIED THAT **MARGARITA CHUA SIA**, whose picture appears above, of No. 20 J.C. Coolidge Street corner G. Washington Avenue, Parkwood 1, Greens Executive Village, Bgy. Maybunga, Pasig City or 142 A. Luna Street, Bo. Malinao, Pasig City, is the subject of a **WARRANT OF ARREST** issued by the Presiding Judge of Branch No. 143, Regional Trial Court of Makati City, in connection with the case of Estafa with **'NO BAIL'** docketed as Criminal Case Numbers 01-2709 to 2710.

A SUBSTANTIAL REWARD awaits anyone who shall provide material and vital information that will lead to the arrest of the subject person. Any information leading to her arrest may be communicated to the following numbers: 813-1520 or 892-4702.

Any and all information leading to the arrest of MARGARITA CHUA SIA, including the informant's identity and contact number shall be treated with utmost confidentiality and privacy.

(PDI -- Jan. 7 & 8, 2002)

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORTS
Third Elementary Education Project

PHILIPPINES 2000
Sama Sama sa DECS

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Date: January 4, 2002
Loan No. 4108-PH
IFB No. PISU-CO/202001

1. The Government of the Republic of the Philippines (through the Department of Education (DepEd) has received a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) in various currencies towards the financing of Third Elementary Education Project (TEEP). It is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contract for Supply and Delivery of Equipment and Office Furniture to the Elementary Leader Schools (ELS) in the Philippines.
2. The Department of Education (DepEd), Project Implementation Support Unit (PISU) for Third Elementary Education Project (TEEP), now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the Supply and Delivery of Equipment and Office Furniture.

Item	Quantity	Item	Quantity
Office Desk and Chair	352 sets	Television and VCR Set with Stand	352 sets
Computer Desk and Chair	352 sets	Audio System	352 sets
Rectangular Table	704 pcs	Overhead Projector	352 sets
Conference Chair	2,816 pcs	Desktop Computer Set	352 sets
		Inkjet Printer	352 sets
		Mimeographing Machine	352 sets

Project or delivery sites are the 352 Elementary Leader Schools located in 22 provinces under the Third Elementary Education Project (TEEP). A bidder may submit a bid for one item, two or more items, or all of the items indicated above.

3. For the purpose of this bidding, eligible bidders shall be those who have experience in the supply or selling and distribution or delivery of office equipment to remote areas in a developing country like the Philippines. The Purchaser will grant a margin of preference to goods manufactured in the Philippines.
4. Interested eligible bidders may inspect the bidding documents at or obtain further information from the Office Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) for Foreign Assisted Projects, Ground Floor, Rizal Building II, DepEd Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City, Tel. Nos. (632) 636-6542 or 632-1361 local 2115, Fax No. (632) 636-6542, http://www.decs.gov.ph/
5. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested bidders starting January 7, 2002 upon submission of letter of intent to the above and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of Two Thousand Pesos (P2,000.00).
6. Bidding will be conducted through the International Competitive Bidding (ICB) procedures specified in the World Bank's Guidelines: Procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits, and is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the Guidelines.
7. Bids must be delivered to the Bulwagan ng Karunungan, Rizal Building I, Department of Education, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City, Philippines, or or before 10:00 AM on February 19, 2002 and must be accompanied by a security of two (2) percent of total bid price.
8. Bids will be opened in the presence of bidders' representatives who choose to attend at 10:00 AM on February 19, 2002 at Bulwagan ng Karunungan, Rizal Building I, Department of Education, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City.
9. Prior to bid opening, a pre-bid conference will be held on January 24, 2002, 10:00 AM, at the address indicated in paragraph 8.

(Sgd.) **ERNESTO S. PANGAN**
Undersecretary
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI -- Jan. 5, 7 & 9, 2002)

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John 12:16

"... absent with the body to be present with the Lord."
2 Corinthians 5:8

LUDOVICO GARCIA LANSANGAN

of Sta. Ana, Pampanga and Virginia, USA

Peacefully joined our Lord
on January 5, 2002 at the age of 78.

His beloved wife **Mons**; son **Bobby** and daughter-in-law **Violeta**; his sisters and brother **Grace, Cora, Pining, Norma, Cely** and **Jose Jr.**; in-laws, nephews, nieces, and other relatives and friends request everyone to rejoice with them at his return to our Creator and Redeemer, and to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Holy Family Chapel at Mt. Carmel Shrine Parish at New Manila, Quezon City.

Cremation will be on Saturday, January 12, 2002 at Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at Mt. Carmel Shrine.

Whoever believes in Him shall not perish,
but have eternal life.
John 3:16

Guillerma "Memay" Pacion Querubin

1916-2002

of Camalaniugan, Cagayan & Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord on January 5, 2002
at the age of 85.

Her beloved husband **RAMON**; her loving children **ROLANDO & EDITH, ROBERTO & SHIRLEY, RACHEL & HAJAR, CONSEJO & ALLEN**, and **MILAGROS**; her grandchildren; great grandchild; and relatives request the pious readers to pray for her eternal rest.

Her remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels, Araneta Ave., Quezon City.

Interment will be on Thursday, January 10, 2002 at Everest Hills Memorial Park, Susana Heights, Muntinlupa, after the 11:00 a.m. Mass.

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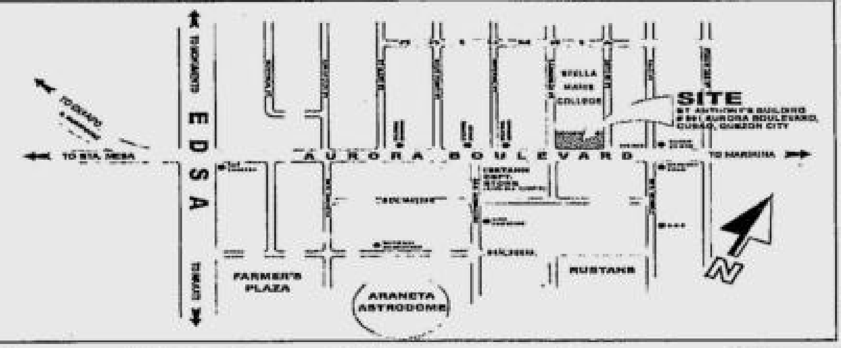
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INQUIRER
TRiViA
By BONG BARRAMEDA

Coins

Q. Who invented the coin?

A: The first coins are believed to have been minted by Croesus, the famous wealthy ruler of the ancient Asian Minor kingdom of Lydia, in about 700 B.C. The coins were small flattened pellets made of a mixture of gold and silver known as *electrum*, found in its natural state in the river that flowed through Sardis, the capital of Lydia. On one side they bore a triangular or square hallmark and on the obverse side, an Assyrian-style lion whose nose was decorated by a sort of shining gold.

Try a Trick. Bet you can't drop a coin between your two ring fingers. *The Setup:* Place the tips of the ring fingers together. Fold the other fingers down so the knuckles touch. Have an assistant put a coin between the tips of your ring fingers. Now try to open your fingers and drop theh coin. (Note: You may not slide your fingers apart.) *The Fix:* The ring fingers cannot move independently of the other fingers. Ligaments connect them to the other fingers, especially the middle finger. When the middle finger is immobilized, so is the ring finger. The coin is trapped. (Some people, especially pianists, have stretched the ligaments that control the free motion of the ring fingers. When just the middle fingers are restricted, the ring fingers can still move. However, if the knuckles of all three other fingers are made to touch, even musicians can't make the coin drop.)

Past Forward. This day in 1838: US inventor Samuel F. B. Morse demonstrated a revolutionary pulse-sending telegraph that would open up a new world in long-distance communications. The pulses are short or long, producing 'dots' and 'dashes' which can be used as a code to represent letters of the alphabet.

WORD WATCH

Telegraph (tel'eh graf'): from Greek *tele* ('far off') + *graphein* ('to write').

PDI – January 7, 2002

FINDING AN ANSWER

Bush, Democrats cross swords on economy

WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush and opposition Democrats have joined battle over how to restore health to the ailing US economy, which may decide who holds Congress after the November 2002 midterm elections.

Each side hopes to convince a US public gripped by mounting fears over a recession that officially began last March and deepened after the Sept. 11 terror strikes that it has the prescription to restore growth.

The president, on vacation at his Texas ranch since just after Christmas, was to travel to California and Oregon last week to stump for a roughly $100-billion stimulus package stalled by Senate Democrats.

Bush, who has earned soaring job approval ratings with his handling of the US-led war on terrorism, should enjoy another high-profile chance to make his case at his first official State of the Union speech in late January.

"The president will begin the New Year by focusing on the domestic agenda, specifically what I refer to as the 'two E's'—the economy and education," White House spokesperson Scott McClellan told reporters.

Such tactics helped Bush last year win his most substantial legislative victory yet: passage of an 11-year, $1.35-trillion tax cut that top Democrats have blamed—with the recession—for vanishing budget surpluses.

"At a time when we need to fight both a war and a recession, when our nation has urgent needs on all fronts, the tax cut has taken away our flexibility and left us with only two choices. Both of them are bad," Senate Democratic Majority Leader Tom Daschle charged Friday. *AFP*

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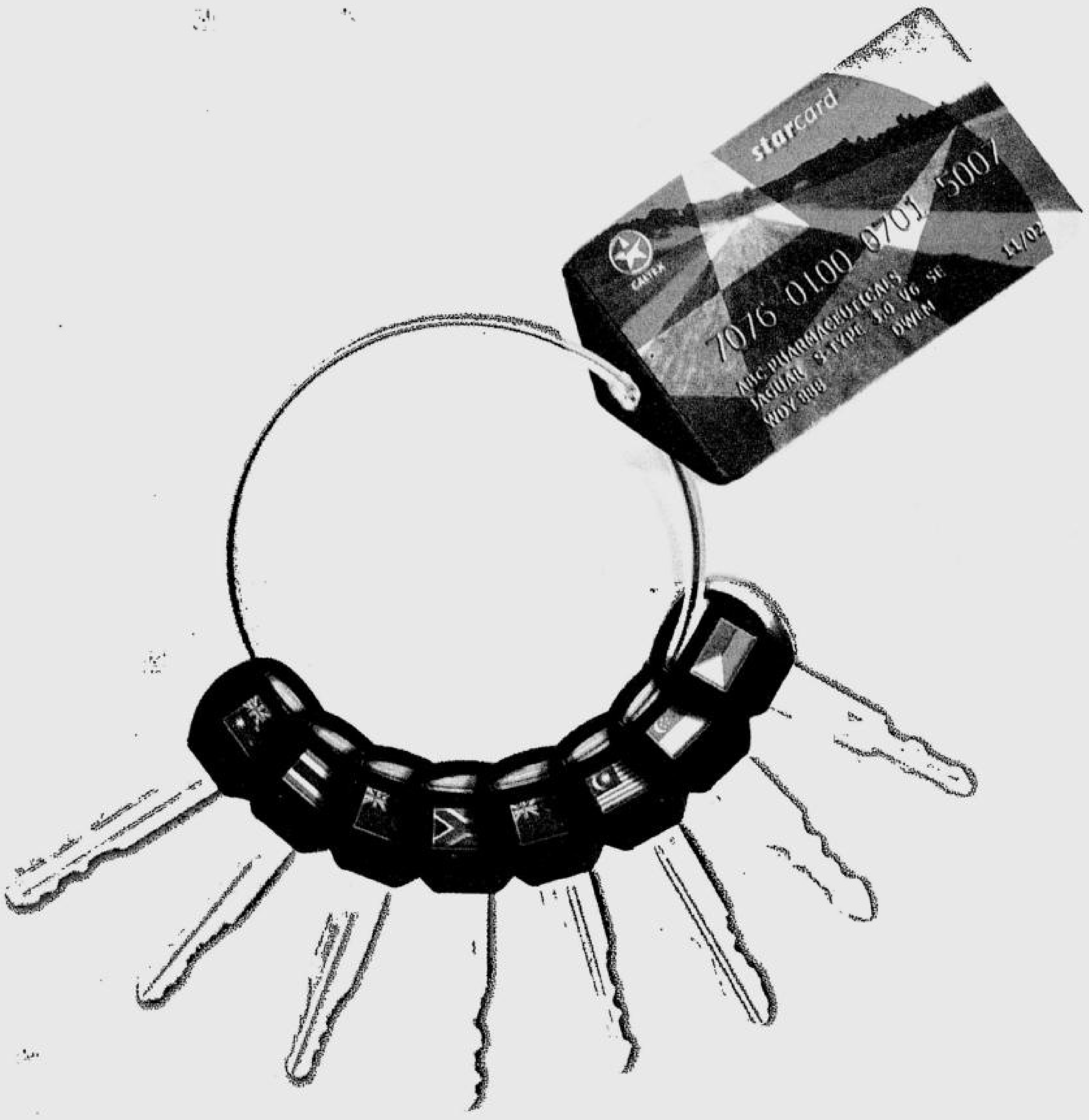

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What Drives You CALTEX

AT&T to take $1-B charge on jobs cuts

NEW YORK—Long-distance telephone company AT&T Corp., which plans to sell its cable television business to Comcast Corp., said on Friday that it would take a $1-billion charge in the fourth quarter to cover the cost of cutting about 10,000 jobs through 2002.

The pretax restructuring charge, which has been expected, will pay for severance packages and other costs related to cutting jobs in administration, and in its business and consumer telephone operations, which have been hurt by slowing demand and increasing competition.

About 5,100 people—more than half of all affected employees—have already left the payroll, or have been individually notified. Another 5,000 employees are expected to leave the payroll in 2002 and have been told that their departments will be reduced in size, the company said.

AT&T had roughly 125,000 employees at the start of 2001. After the job cuts, the No. 1 US long-distance telephone and cable television company will be left with about 115,000 workers at the end of 2002. However, the company could add workers—such as sales and support staff—if needed to handle fast-growing products such as data and Internet services.

New York-based AT&T said in October that it would take a fourth-quarter charge as it cut costs, but it did not quantify the size of the charge at that time. Wall Street analysts expected AT&T to earn 4 cents a share during the fourth quarter, according to research company Thomson Financial/First Call.

AT&T warned the soft economy and stiff competition would hurt results in core telephone operations through 2002, and revenues in both the consumer and business units would shrink next year.

Already hurting from price wars and competition from the Baby Bells, AT&T felt added pressure from the weak economy, sluggish business activity and low consumer confidence.

AT&T said these trends would continue through 2002, forcing it to cut expenses and investments in its business and consumer units. AT&T put its Basking Ridge, New Jersey office building on the market for sale or lease, and continued to cut jobs. *Reuters*

'Euro-phoria' makes life hell for banks

PARIS—If life wasn't hard enough for banks and shopkeepers adjusting to Europe's new currency, the French have found their own novel way of welcoming the currency to cause more headaches.

While one pays for a baguette with a 500-franc (76.22-euro) note, another empties out 30 francs worth of small change at the bank.

For the shops, it is now no longer a rare sight for someone to whip out a 500-note for the daily paper, causing a frantic search for change in euros.

Meanwhile, French banks, already expecting a rush to branches, have been surprised to discover that people are simply using the financial institutions to dispose of their short change.

"People come to change small amounts, between 30 and 50 francs in small coinage, while they make their small purchases at shops with large notes," a statement released by the French banking federation said.

Examples are legion and when it's not someone off-loading 555-five-centime bits, it's a woman arriving with 10 separate envelopes containing 10 different European currencies to change into euros.

And in one extreme case, a woman in her 60s turned up with 1.8 million francs in cash for which she received 550 five-hundred-euro notes.

The Bank of France is nevertheless appealing for calm. "Rather than emptying your pockets at the bank, use your coins at the shops," the bank advises.

In practice, the French have until June 30, 2002 to change their francs at high street banks, and the national bank has said it will continue to accept them until 2012.

However, the run on euros has led to some branches refusing to change money for all except their own customers.

And in some Paris branches, "No Change" notices have been posted in the banks while one particular bank in the capital has said that it is only prepared to dole out small sums.

Another branch has complained that while they are supposed to change everyone's euros, the bank simply does not have enough of the new currency.

The Bank of France and the banking federation have played down these problems though, suggesting that they are basically local difficulties and that the "overall provision" in the words of the bank's governor, Jean Claude Trichet, has been satisfactory. *AFP*

BUSINESS*Monday*

MARGIE QUIMPO-ESPINO, Business Features Editor

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Is government giving us right figures?

By Raul C. Dancel

IS the government being forthright with its numbers? Is the economy really in as good a shape as the government would like the public to believe?

The Macapagal administration has gone to great lengths to underscore the fact that—peace and order aside—it did a great job last year and is eager to do more this year.

In paid advertisements and at every opportunity she gets, President Macapagal-Arroyo runs down rosy economic numbers to show that despite a political turmoil in the wake of her predecessor's overthrow, the world economic slowdown hitting Philippine exports and the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in the United States, the domestic economy is doing better than most of its troubled neighbors.

Her chief economic manager has announced that the country is still on track to attaining a gross domestic product growth of 3.3 percent and gross national product growth of 3.7 percent.

For 2002, the GDP growth target has been placed at about 4 to 4.5 percent while GNP growth is at 4.5 to 5.5 percent. Inflation, meanwhile, is seen falling to 5 to 6 percent and interest rates at about 10 to 11 percent. The annual inflation rate for 2001 has been estimated at 6.1 percent while interest rates are at just under 9 percent.

Pessimism

Despite these solidly positive numbers, however, a majority of Filipinos still feel poorer nearly a year after Ms Macapagal came to power and are generally pessimistic over short-term economic prospects.

One out of every two Filipinos believe that over the past year, they "often or always" lacked money for their usual needs, according to a poll conducted last month by the Social Weather Station.

In the survey, 56 percent said their personal quality of life had fallen over the period, with 14 percent feeling better off. They were divided over personal prospects for the next year, with 29 percent optimistic and 27 percent pessimistic.

As to the trend of the economy as a whole next year, 51 percent were pessimistic and 15 percent were optimistic. Only 13 percent felt that there would be more jobs available, compared to 63 percent who felt that there would be fewer jobs.

Doesn't add up

So why all the pessimism?

The answer probably lies in the fact that the numbers don't add up, and, well, you can crunch these numbers, but you can't eat them for breakfast. Take the employment figures, for instance.

The Department of Labor and Employment has reported that over 2 million jobs were created between July 2000 and July 2001. But what kind of jobs were these? Out of 2.2 million jobs created over 12 months, about a third were held by unpaid family workers, while another 1.2 million were classified as irregular and low-earning jobs. Also, during the one-year period under review, some 757,000 workers lost full-time employment, while the number of part-time workers grew by 34.6 percent to 2.8 million. With 10.9 million workers, part-time jobs now take up 37.2 percent of total employment.

Overall, with 3.5 million jobless, 6 million underemployed and 8.3 million working abroad, the domestic economy, despite chalking up positive numbers in recent years, still seems unable to provide enough livelihood for some 42 percent of the labor force.

Poverty incidence

Then there's the fact that poverty still afflicts 40 percent of the population. At that rate, poverty incidence in the Philippines has been the highest in Southeast Asia, higher than in Malaysia (8 percent in 1998), Thailand (12.9 percent in 1998) and Indonesia (18.2 percent in 1999).

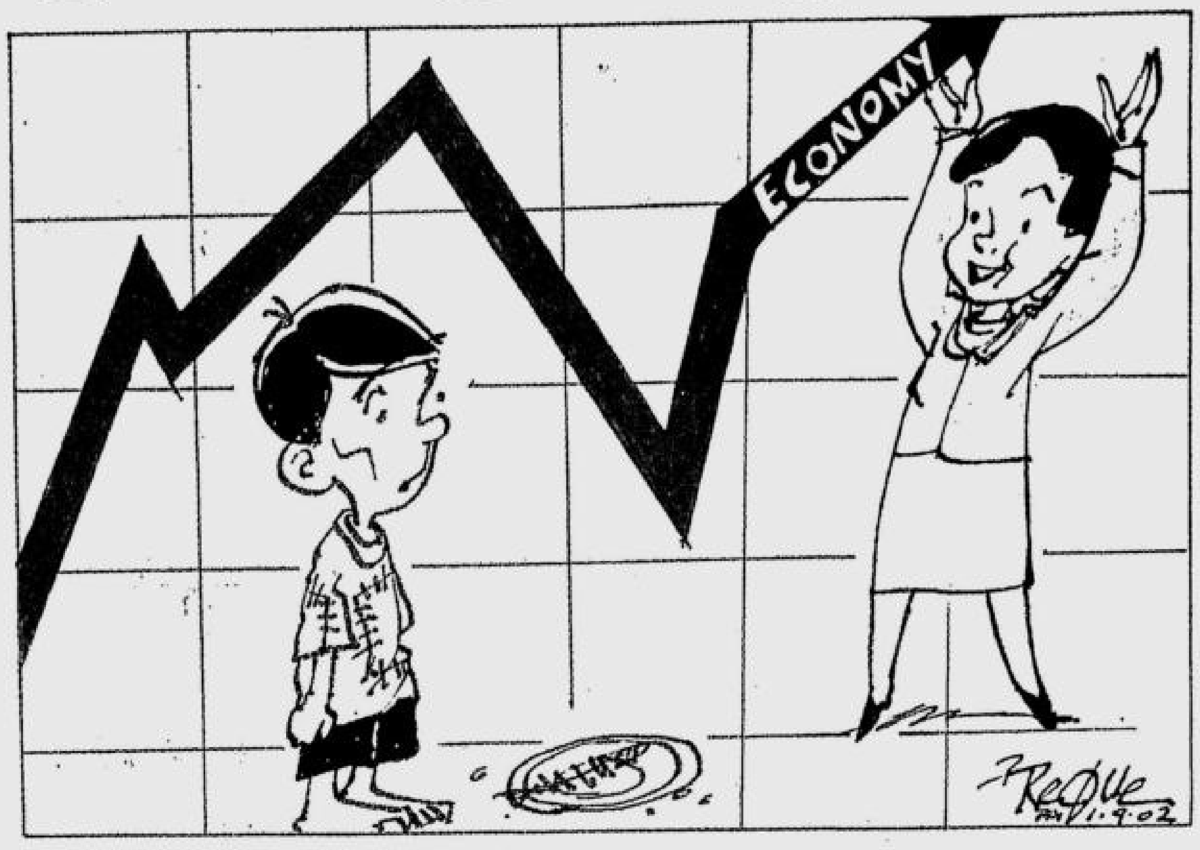
Economists believe that with the population growing at an annual rate of 2.3 percent, the Philippine economy would have to grow by at least 7 percent every year over the medium term to reduce poverty.

Real per capita gross domestic product has been at the levels of the early 1980s. According to the 1998 nationwide survey of the Food and Nutrition Research Institute, eight out of every 10 Filipino children are underweight. Even the United Nations Children's Fund has ranked the Philippines among the top 10 countries with malnourished children aged below five years.

Weak areas

Industrial growth remains a weak area of the economy. At 3.6 percent, the growth rate of the country's industries is the lowest compared to Thailand (5.2 percent), Indonesia (5.5 percent), Vietnam (9.7 percent) and Malaysia (14.7 percent).

The agriculture sector has not fared any better. It lost over a million jobs between 1994 and 2000, increasing rural poverty by 690,000 families. Between 1990 and 1999, rice imports grew by 540 percent, corn by 320 percent, poultry by 580 percent, beef by 230 percent, pork by 120 percent and fish by 45 percent, turning a $1.3-billion trade surplus into a $3.5-billion deficit.



Annual growth in the agriculture sector in the last 20 years has been at a meager 1.5 percent, as competition from cheap imports, government neglect, and land and crop conversion hit harvests. Twenty years before that, the sector was growing at 4.2 percent.

Landlessness remains widespread: 6 percent of families still own and control over 60 percent of total agricultural land. After 13 years of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program, the government has only achieved 68 percent of its already lowered target of 8.1 million hectares—not yet taking into consideration mounting reports of reversals and land re-concentration. Most of the land distributed were non-private agricultural lands where the government did not yet have to deal with its bases of landlord support.

Another discomforting figure: The country's foreign debt stock grew 70.3 percent from $30.6 billion in 1990 to $52.1 in 2000, almost double the increase from a decade earlier. By last year, the foreign debt was 78.8 percent of GDP, fast approaching levels during the mid-1980s.

Meanwhile, the exchange rate fell 55.1 percent from 28.50 to 44.20 to a dollar; the current rate hovers around 52 to a dollar, and the country's chronic trade deficits are nowhere near being resolved.

Deceit with a purpose

The government seldom discusses these figures largely because they are difficult to explain away. The usual way out has been to blame it on the guy in front, so most administrations tend to blame their predecessors for economic problems that are difficult to solve.

IS GOV'T/ C3

New jobs for 21st century: Separating hype from reality

NEW job descriptions are appearing with increasing frequency. A scan of company openings being advertised in JobStreet Philippines, an online recruitment center, gives a sense of what is happening.

Of the more than 700 positions listed on the site, 30 had job titles that appeared only in the last five years.

Some of these new titles include chat/board coordinator, configuration managers, device driver engineers, network administrator, network engineer, page publisher, Web developer and Web publisher, among others.

IT ages

Rapid advances in computer and telecommunications technology are the main drivers behind the emergence of new job titles. It's what's turning a seemingly boring job title such as "auditor" into something more exciting like "e-commerce accountant," which incidentally is one of the hottest future jobs listed by the US News and World Report. Apparently, e-commerce accountants are those who advise companies on whether it makes financial sense to sell goods and services online.

The job still requires the traditional accounting training and license, but to keep abreast with the times, they also need to be familiar with software and Internet technologies.

In the Philippines, the emergence of new, infotech-related job titles will depend on how fast Internet usage spreads among the various segments of the population. So far there are only 500,000 Internet connections in the country but are relatively growing fast and is expected to double in the next few years.

A number of major private and government agencies in the country today have already employed Web designers, content producers and other Internet professionals. Although most of these are done in-house, the demand for the services of specialized independent Web professionals who are skilled in a new, more technically demanding forms of Internet presence such as e-commerce still remains strong as ever.

These new Internet-related jobs, however, take a lot of getting used to. For instance, 28-year-old Connie was a former newspaper journalist who was used to writing with a 5 p.m. deadline on her mind.

But now that she works for an online news site, she admits to having a hard time adjusting to the real-time demands of her new job of writing a story as soon as she gets enough information for immediate download. It's stressful yet satisfying, she says.

Multiple skills, tasks

The rise in new Internet-related job titles is perhaps the most visible aspect of the changes sweeping the local job market, but apparently it's not the only one.

Maragtas Amante, dean of the UP School of Labor and Industrial Relations, said that globalization and tougher competition are two more factors that changed the nature of work and of jobs in a number of manufacturing industries.

According to Amante, these changes can be traced to about four or five years ago when the country joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) and ratified an international treaty bringing down protectionist barriers for local industries.

This treaty forced companies to downsize and rationalize their workforce to improve productivity and efficiency.

Helped along by the advent of computers and information technology, employees are now performing not just one but several tasks at a time. Like if in the past it was enough for an office staff to know how to type, nowadays he or she needs to be familiar with computers and several other software programs, and must be able to plan and coordinate activities as well.

Such is the case of 35-year-old Lorena who works for a large foreign bank in Makati and has four bosses whose offices are adjacent to each other. She says the work is actually manageable because of the wonders of technology but she had to give up her usual shopping during lunch hour.

Tough on college grade

If the future is going to be more

NEW/ C4

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To have just enough, control your inventory

By Arturo O. Mangabat
UP Institute for Small-Scale Industries

GOING INTO BUSINESS

THIS is all about making sure that you have in stock just enough of raw materials, components or spare parts, and in-process and finished goods when you need these on the shop floor.

"Just enough," of course, means not too little or too much. "Just enough" should also connote "just in time."

The process of ensuring you have just enough just in time of your stock requirements is known as inventory control.

The basic idea behind inventory is to run your business effectively with the least amount of stock. To do this, you must answer three questions:

When do I order? How often? How much?

To answer these questions, you should be able to distinguish between basic stock goods and seasonal goods because each kind is controlled differently.

Basic goods are those that are sold at about the same volume at all times or regularly used in production. For instance, in a food store, these include rice, flour, cooking oil, sugar, etc.

In a furniture factory, these include planks, plywood sheets, nails, screws, glue, paint and varnish.

Seasonal goods are those that move quickly at a certain time and slowly at others. Notebooks, for example, are seasonal in a bookstore because they sell heavily just before school opening. In a garment store, people usually look for warm clothing, umbrellas and raincoats during rainy season. A toy factory needs big quantities of plastic pellets for toy production in preparation for Christmas.

When to order

When ordering basic goods, do so in good time so that these may be delivered before your present stock runs out. You have to know how long it usually takes between sending an order and receiving it. This is called "delivery delay."

Then you have to estimate how many units you expect to sell at a given time. This is your "reserve stock." For example, if the delivery delay is one month and you sell or use 25 units a week, then your reserve stock will be: 4 weeks x 25 units = 100 units.

But since you may sell more than you estimated or your orders may arrive later than expected, you need some "safety stock." Otherwise, you run the risk of running short of items you need.

The rule is that the safety stock is half of the reserve stock. In the example cited, the safety stock will then be one-half of 100 or 50 units.

The sum of the reserve stock and the safety stock—100 + 50 = 150 units—becomes the reorder level. This means that when your stock reaches that level, it is time to order again.

This scheme works well when you can reorder any time. You don't have to count your stock everyday to use this scheme. All you have to do is to label each item in your stock room with that item's reorder level. When the stock reaches that level, you simply make a note to reorder.

However, it will probably make more sense to make one larger order once a week for each supplier than a small order everyday. After all, many suppliers give discounts for volume orders.

In this case, all you have to do is to add a few units to the reorder level to allow for the few days that will pass before you send the order.

In the case of seasonal goods, the important thing is to order in good time. As the goods do not move much between seasons, the question of reorder level is not that important. However, don't forget that your competitors will likely place orders at the same time you do. So, it is possible that your supplier may run out of stock of some items. You might then want to play it safe by placing your orders early.

Suppose you are stocking for the opening of the school year in June and the delivery delay is one month. You can order in May or one month away. It would be safer, however, and doesn't cost extra, to order in April or even March with specific instructions to deliver in the first week of June.

How often

Basic goods should be ordered every week. There is no reason to have excess stock of these types of goods, except if you wish to order less frequently. Remember, though, that if you order too much, your goods face the danger of deteriorating in your stock room.

There are times, however, when you cannot order weekly. For instance, if you sell 10 units of an item each week and you have to buy it in cases of 24 units, obviously you cannot order every week.

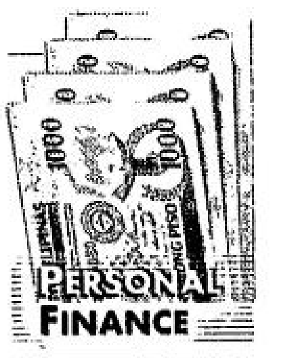
TO HAVE/ C4

Buying golf shares? It may be time to buy

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

RESEARCH done a few years ago on the young, male, urban professionals showed that there are two things that this growing market aspire for the most—a car and a share in a golf and country club.

Have these two things, the study said, and the yuppies believe that they have got it made.



This partly explains the sudden boom in the development of golf and country club over the past decade. Wide tracts of land were redeveloped to give way to bigger and better golf clubs. Even companies that did not know the first thing about building and operating a country club entered the business to cash in on the boom.

But boom turned bust after the 1997 Asian currency crisis. Share prices of golf and country clubs plummeted and prices have not yet stabilized, says Eduardo H. Galvez, managing director of GG & A Club Shares, a company involved in the trading and leasing of golf shares.

Galvez tells the INQUIRER that prices of golf shares have dropped by an average of 16 percent from last year. Golf shares that were worth over P1 million dropped 11 percent this year while those worth about P500,000 dropped 15 percent and 19 percent for low-priced shares or those worth below P500,000.

The drop in prices, Galvez says, presents a good opportunity to buy golf and country club shares at a bargain. He, however, stresses that people looking for golf shares should buy them because they are going to use it, and not merely as an investment in the hope that share prices would recover lost ground.

"I always tell people that it is a good time to buy shares if they are going to use it. There is nothing worse than to buy something that they are not going to use because they have to pay for the club dues," he says.

For those looking for an investment, Galvez says they should wait a little while longer before they come in because there is still room for share prices to bottom out.

In the meantime, Galvez recommends that yuppies who want to get a piece of the golf and country club action to invest in playing rights that are being offered for lease by owners of many golf and country club shares.

These playing rights give access to the golf and country clubs without having to pay an arm and a leg for ownership. This also gives the investor the opportunity to try out the golf clubs first, and if they like it then they can invest later on in a proprietary golf or country club share.

To determine the right golf and country club for you, Galvez offers the following guidelines.

1. Look at the facilities, check if it offers facilities for different family members.
2. If you are looking at just a golf club, make sure that it is accessible.
3. Check the management of the hotel, talk to the other members of the club and see if they are satisfied with the operations and maintenance of the golf and country club.

Is government . . .

(From page C1)

In the Macapagal administration's case, the approach has been to magnify the good points and deal with the bad ones later, if they can't be ignored altogether.

Last month, President Macapagal-Arroyo mounted an economic summit to do precisely just that: trumpet her government's achievements. The assumption was that her administration was doing everything right in most areas, especially in propping up the economy, except in peace and order. It, therefore, adopted measures aimed at curbing terrorism within six months and at preventing an economic downturn that could aggravate poverty.

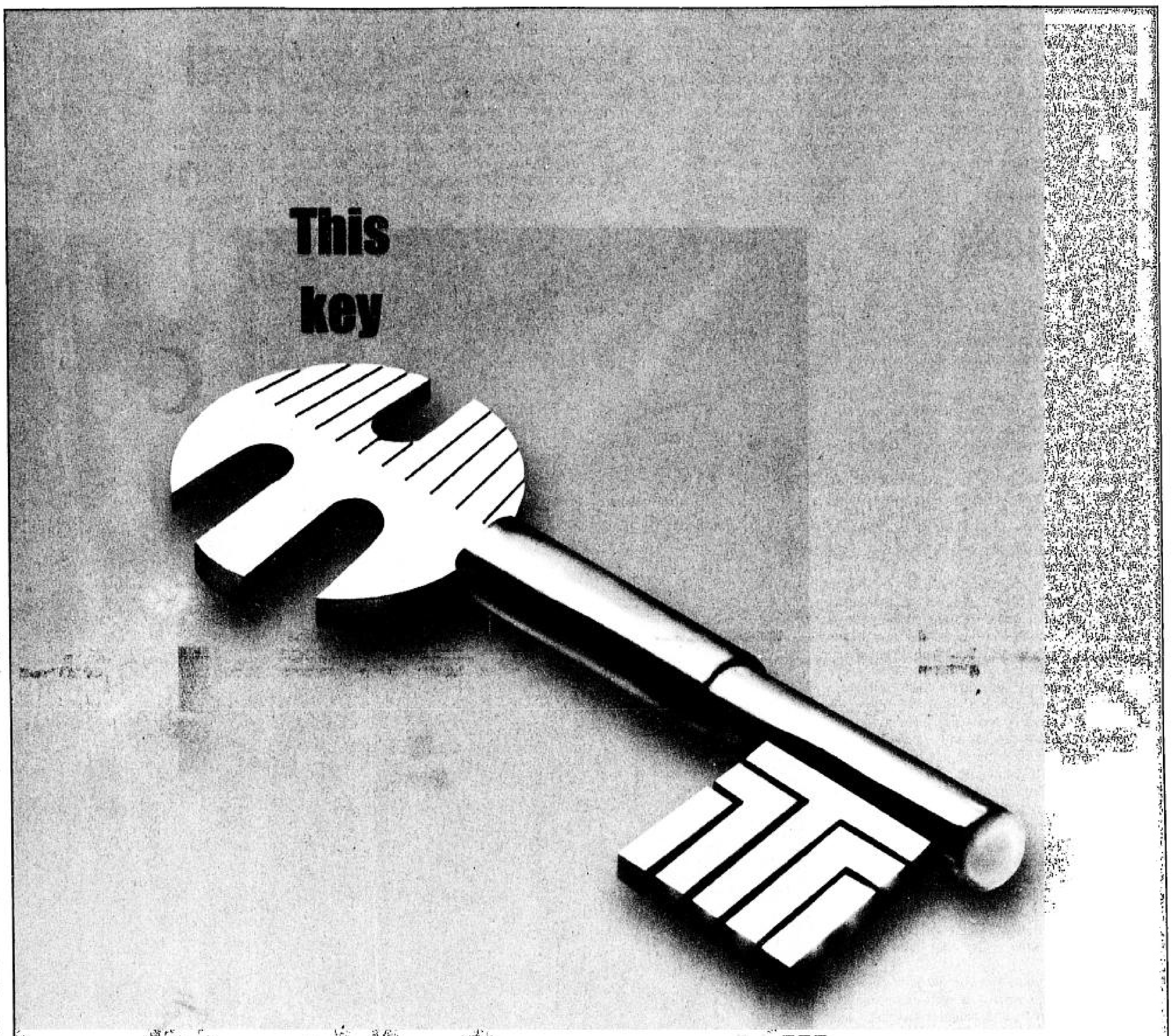
For critics of the administration's economic policies, however, the summit set off on some wrong assumptions.

"It's a good idea, the government sitting down with the people to genuinely thresh out what to do in the face of a crisis," Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo remarks. "Too bad the government doesn't really care for it."

Ocampo describes the economic summit as "little more than an elaborate and expensive public relations gimmick to project optimism, goodwill and unity—an obscene exercise in these times of real crisis."

"It is deceitful about the true state of the people and the real roots of the crisis of poverty. But more, it is deceit with a purpose: to justify the continued implementation of the very policies that have brought such misery to the Filipino people," he argues.

From where Ocampo stands, the upbeat forecast of the country's economic managers are nothing more than half-truths and selective interpretations of facts.



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Changing computing architecture

MAPping THE FUTURE

By Manuel Alcuaz Jr.

INFORMATION systems like buildings and organizations have architectures. Architecture is the structuring and integration of components, the choice of materials and technology, and the distribution of functions to achieve the structure/system objectives.

Good architecture should take into account the user requirements, available technology, human factors, and economics to synthesize a structure or system that is cost-effective and aesthetic.

One of the key variables in information system architecture and in business organization design is the issue of centralization and decentralization.

We shall trace the history of computing architectures and show how the choice between centralization and decentralization is influenced by available technology and economics.

Mainframe era

In the 1960s, before the dawn of minicomputers, PCs and client/server LANs, mainframe ruled the world. And centralized computing was the dominant architecture.

Mainframes were physically big and very expensive. A company could not afford many mainframes.

I frequently say that in those days there were two commandments of computing:

1. Thou shall have but one computer
2. And it shall be IBM,

During the very early mainframe days, data entry was also centralized. Documents were brought to data entry facilities, key punched, verified, and delivered to computer rooms.

The data then went through a series of steps: card reading, validation, editing, posting and report generation.

The advent of terminals was an initial step to decentralization. Transaction entry could be made directly by users but all data processing was still done in the central mainframe.

Distributed computing

The introduction of inexpensive minicomputers made distributed computing possible. Early users of minicomputers were in science labs and engineering. But the cost-effectiveness of minicomputers particularly digital, HP and data general made departmental and branch computing feasible and attractive.

The primary reasons for distributed computing were functional specialization and geographical needs.

The PC revolution was made possible by very inexpensive personal computers from Apple, Radio Shack and IBM. While the Apple and TRS-80 were based on proprietary software, the IBM PC used Microsoft DOS and Intel microprocessors. This enabled other manufacturers to build very inexpensive IBM PC clones.

Microsoft and Intel rather than IBM became the dominant players in the growing PC industry.

The battle cry was a "PC on every desktop" and " information at your finger tips." This was the ultimate in decentralized computing. However, due to the largely unplanned way in which PCs exploded in many companies, I call this "scattered computing" rather than "distributed computing."

LAN and client/server

Clearly maintaining a dozen or more copies of accounts receivable on stand alone PCs, and perhaps 20 copies of inventory on another bunch of stand alone PCs was chaos. Decentralization had gone too far.

There obviously was a need for consistent data throughout the organization, the elimination of tedious data synchronization, and the sharing of data.

The Local Area Network was the solution. The applications still run on PCs now referred to as workstations but the shared data was centralized on a PC with large disk capacity referred to as a file server.

In addition, the LAN had networking hardware to connect the workstations to the file server and a Network Operating System. Novell with its Netware Operating System originally dominated the network OS market until Windows NT came around.

Local Area Network had elements of centralization (i.e. of the data on the file server). However, LANs innovated distributed computing.

LANs like centralized mainframes had terminals, but on the LAN they were literally "workstations" doing most of the work (presentation and input, data searching, computation, and file updating), while on mainframes they were "dumb" terminals limited to input and very simple text presentation.

Client/Server computing is an enhancement of the LAN where data search and update was moved back to the server. In a client/server network we have clients (not workstations anymore) and database servers.

Very powerful and inexpensive client/server systems could be built using UNIX or Window NT operating systems. They became very popular because of their cost-effectiveness compared to mainframe and ASI400 systems.

The Internet

In recent years the Internet has revolutionized how we communicate, how we access data, and how we build applications.

The Internet is in essence a network of networks made possible by the magic of standards such as TCP/IP, HTTP, and HTML.

The Internet and the Web are fundamentally distributed systems where data and programs are stored in millions of Web servers and can be accessed from anywhere in the world where there is Internet connectivity.

E-mail has gone a long way from the days of the "Pony Express", telegraph, telex, and even fax. It is inexpensive and very reliable. The Internet was designed to stand nuclear attack and has no single point of failure.

The Web Browser using HTML makes Web pages from an unlimited choice Web servers and websites readily accessible.

Web technology has been extended beyond browsing to handle transaction processing.

For millions of shoppers to access and transact with e-commerce sites such as Amazon.com through their browsers is great.

However, many companies have taken the browser and Web server technologies to build real time transaction processing and have gone full circle back to the centralized mainframe architecture of the '60's.

First generation Internet Applications have a number of limitations, such as:

- Browser based application do not provide for local processing, at best they provide for simple keyboard input to Web forms.
- Browsers give you a limited porthole view to oceans of data available on the Internet. You are extremely limited in your ability to integrate information from different websites. Or to modify and add value to the info you browse.
- There is no easy way to integrate the Web and Browser world with information processing world.
- There is limited interaction. The user initiates interaction with the Web server. And there is no capability for server to server or client to server interactions.

Finally, many browser and web server implementations end up being very expensive in telecommunication costs. To provide real time response, these systems require dedicated ports and high bandwidth leased lines since data and applications are centralized at the server.

A single transaction requires numerous roundtrips between the browser and the server.

There is a need for Distributed Internet Enabled Architecture that will enable the interconnected enterprise, empower employees to make better decisions and make your business more agile. These will be made possible by the next generation Internet technology such as XML Web services and Microsoft.NET architecture and platform.

(This article reflects the personal opinion of the author who is a member of the Management Association of the Philippines, president of Systems Sciences Consult Inc. and member of the board of trustees of De La Salle University Professional Schools Inc. The MAP secretariat and the author may be reached via mapsec@globenet.com.ph)

New jobs . . .

(From page C1)

demanding for those who are already employed, it will be tougher on new job seekers, particularly the fresh college graduates. As before, there will still be more graduates than there will be jobs.

Two factors will work against future college graduates. One, most of the incremental employment to be created in the coming years will be for production and service workers rather than for professionals.

Of the 759,000 new jobs created yearly from 1993 to 1999, only 7 percent were professional and executive positions. Two, jobs in professional positions will require such high level of skills and knowledge that are not yet being taught in the schools.

As a result of the mismatch between supply and demand in the college-level job market as well as their inadequate training, future college graduates will continue to be forced to work for positions and pay levels below their expectations.

Unfortunately, there is no easy-to-follow formula that students can follow to maximize their employment prospects in high-paying jobs when they graduate four or five years from now.

Employment prospects and career advancement are affected by the choice of course and school, as well as academic achievement, individual aptitude and so on. Both education officials and industry leaders are unanimous in emphasizing the primacy of engineering and technical fields, including information technology, if one wishes to be ahead in the race for jobs years from now.

But clearly, that's not enough.

The PMAP study of people in their first jobs showed that analytical, mathematical and communications abilities count a lot in companies' hiring decisions.

The survey found that companies value analytical/conceptual ability as well as communication skills more than technical competence and computer literacy in hiring first-time job seekers.

This goes to show that even in the computer age; it pays not to forget the basics. *(For more handy tools on career success, visit www.jobstreet.com and keep abreast on the latest human resource trends.)*

To have . . .

(From page C3)

You will also have to reckon transport costs. If you are, for example, a grains dealer selling 50 sacks of rice or half a truckload per week—you would save on transport if you order a full truckload at a time.

Seasonal goods should be ordered once per season. The time between seasons may be as short as two weeks (paydays) or as long as a year (Christmas). You must have the goods available in stock so that the buyers can see them before the season starts.

Of course, if you have seasons only two weeks apart, as with goods that sell well during payday, you will find yourself ordering these seasonal goods almost as often as your basic goods.

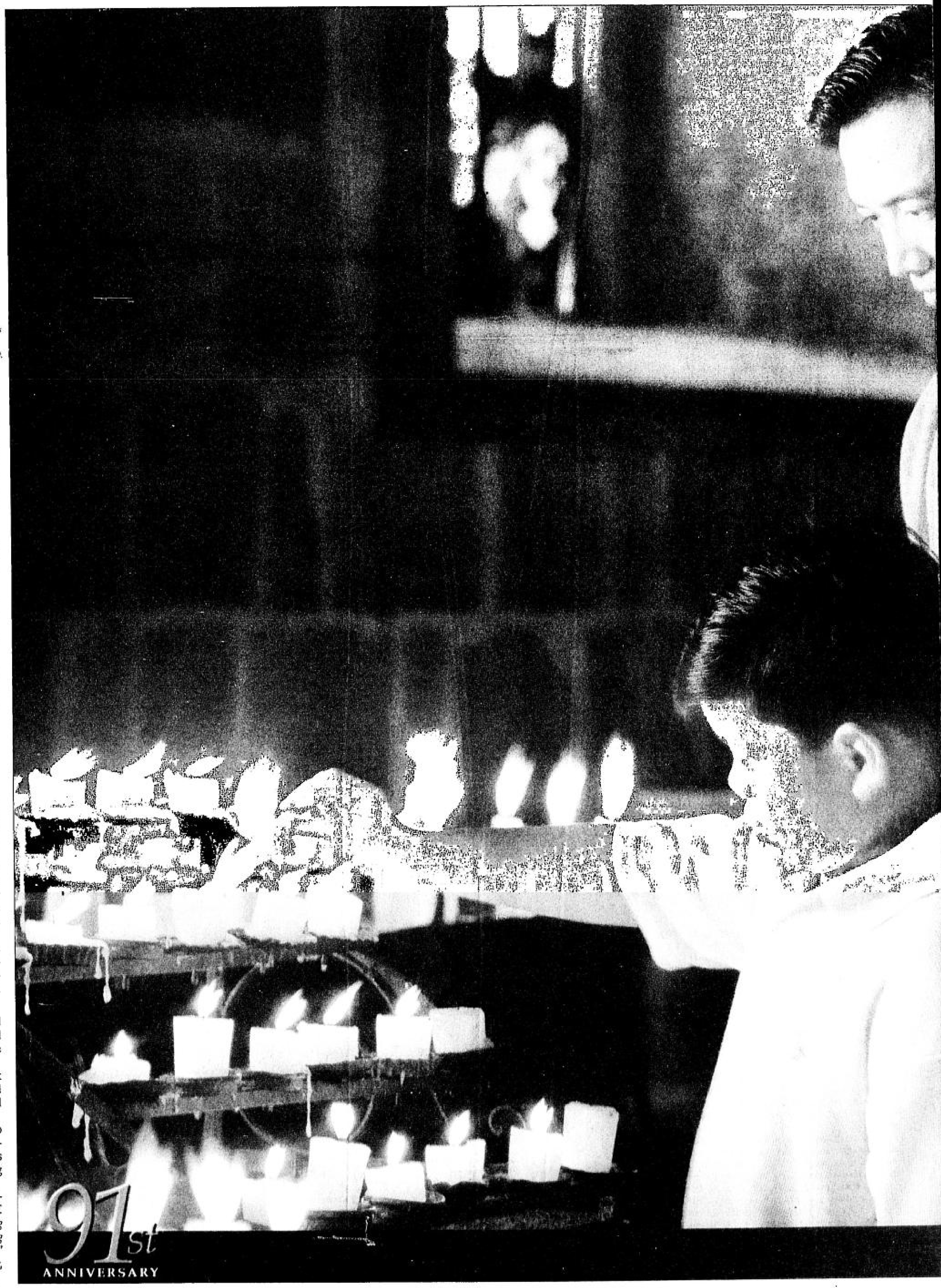
How much

Generally speaking, the quantity you should reorder when the reorder point is reached should be sufficient to replenish the stock based on the reorder level.

For basic goods, order as much as you think you can sell until you order again. For seasonal goods, order as much as you think you will sell until the next selling season.

There are cases, however, when you have to reorder amounts greater than are needed to restore the stock to the reorder point because it is more convenient than constantly re-ordering when materials are received.

(From "You, Too, Can Start Your Own Business" published by the UP ISSI and the Serdef. For those who want to know more about going into business, check out the weekend training program; "Start Your Own Business Course" which will run in February with Mila Labrador, program manager, at 926-6316 or 928-7076.)



Nine reasons why Philippine business faces brighter future

BY JOSE MARIO B. MAXIMIANO
Jose Rizal University, Graduate School

TO be upbeat about the year 2002 is what I want to share. To be part of the gloom and doom that prevail—that I cannot do. Otherwise, it is wicked to be optimistic.

Damn the deterioration in the external environment and economic crisis experienced worldwide, damn the petty politics and damn the peace and order problem. There are unassailable reasons to believe that Philippine business will be better in the year 2002 and beyond. I mean partial reliable reasons to rejoice in the New Year. Now judge for yourself.

1. Confidence of foreign investors. Although others see it differently, the most impressive example of foreign investment is the final decision of Japan's Kirin Brewery to invest P27.9 billion in San Miguel Corp., making San Miguel the 5th biggest brewer in the world. Who says that overseas investors are scared to death of the Philippine state of affairs?

2. Better restructuring, infrastructure and energy programs. The ongoing privatization of National Power Corp. (Napocor) and the never-to-be-postponed operation of the $5-billion Malampaya Deep Water Gas to Power project are positive signs of the advent of a whole new industry that will make the Philippines 52 percent self-sufficient in energy. In addition, the application of the information and communication technology is getting sophisticated, 2002 will be the best time to empower our trade and commerce.

3. Growth of other cities will attract more investments. Amazingly, trade and domestic tourism markets are getting bigger in eight cities in Metro Manila, Cebu and Davao; Calamba City and Batangas City are emerging as logistic hubs in the Calabarzon region; while the burgeoning cities of Muntinlupa and Marikina are expected to sustain local business expansion. Naga City and Legaspi City can be the spark plugs of trade development in the Bicol regions, as Lapu-Lapu City becomes an eco-tourism site in the new year. Magic comes when progress is decentralized.

4. Rural and SME development. With more energy, our country is expected to have an economically active countryside whose development will outspace that of the cities. Rural-based industries linked to agriculture, such as food processing, post-harvest services and packaging, will provide jobs to farm families. Our provinces will teem with cooperatives of small, productive enterprises, which will serve as conduits for financial, marketing and technical assistance from local and international institutions. There is money outside Makati and San Juan!

5. Stronger performance of agriculture. Due to an expanded production of our cash crops (corn, pineapple, coffee and mango) and to a higher output in the three other major sub-sectors (livestock, poultry and fisheries), our agriculture industry will continue to keep the Philippine economy afloat for the next few years. Thanks to our farmers and fisherfolks.

6. Recovery of the export industry. Indications from the United States, our largest export market, are showing early recovery—not in the third or fourth, but in the first quarter of 2002. Since the US economy is still the No. 1 engine for global economic growth, a quick end to US recession will augur well for the Philippine exports, especially the Philippine electronics industry. Happy days for manufacturers and factory workers are indeed coming.

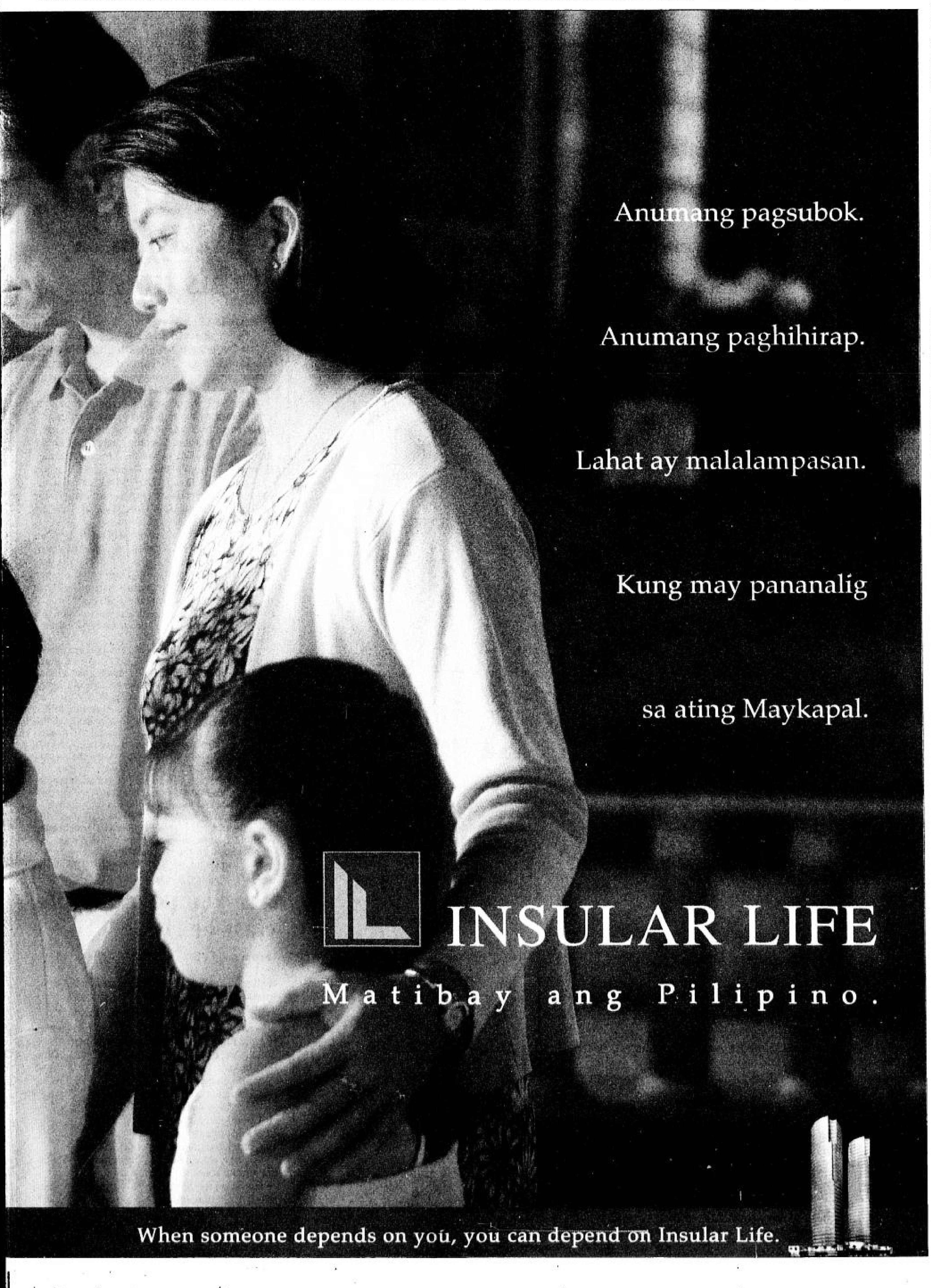
7. Furniture and home décor manufacturing is up. Even with the threat of stiff competition from China, our furniture manufacturing and interior design for the high-endmarkets abroad are reporting higher demands. What do our Asian competitors have compared with the unique skills and competence of the Filipino handicraftworkers?

8. Resiliency of the Filipino managers and entrepreneurs. The Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry or PCCI, a catalyst in building a better business climate in the new year, believes in the liability of the Filipino managers and entrepreneurs. On Jan. 25, 2002, the PCCI, in cooperation with Jose Rizal University Graduate School, will launch the Continuing Executive Education to develop world-class leadership and management competencies among our business practitioners and entrepreneurs.

9. Sound fundamental economic policy. Finally, what do financial institutions such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation or JBIC say about our fiscal reform? Well, the good news is that they have affirmed the Philippines' credit worthiness, as other financial analysts and even the influential Makati Business Club are giving President Macapagal-Arroyo's fundamental economic policy high ratings.

Yes, golden opportunities are fugitives and gainful employment is fare. Despite what the doomsayers say, nevertheless, the heavy foreign debt, the farfetched comparison with Argentina, and the persistent rumor of a coup d'état, we have all the reasons to be hopeful and confident about the future. I still believe in us. We can trust the Filipino capability.

(The author is head of the Jose Rizal University, Graduate School. He was asked by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry to draw up a training program on Leadership and Management Competencies and Enhancement to be held on Jan. 25. Call Yolly Tatad at 531-8031 for details.)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After APT flop, will RP make it this time?

BY RAUL C. DANCEL

THE PHILIPPINES is not new to the concept of an asset management company. It has, in fact, toyed with the idea years ago with the Asset Privatization Trust, and the experiment—as far as the World Bank is concerned—was a failure.

In a study, World Bank research fellow Daniela Klingebiel said the Philippines' APT "was doomed from the start as the government transferred politically motivated loans and fraudulent assets to the AMC, which were difficult to be resolved or to be sold off by a government agency susceptible to political pressure and lacking independence."

The APT was set up in September 1987 to dispose of the bad assets and loans—mostly crony accounts—of government financial institutions.

In 12 years, it was able to transfer up to P108 billion worth of assets equivalent to 21.7 percent of the banking system's assets. Yet, it fell short of what it set out to do.

"The APT did not achieve its narrow objective of rapid asset disposition. By early 1999, 12 years after it was established, the APT still had half of its original assets in its books," Klingebiel wrote in her report.

When the APT was shut down in November 2000, it had yet to dispose of the government's stakes in big-ticket items that included the Philippine National Bank, Manila Electric Co., Philippine National Construction Corp., International Broadcasting Co., and the Philippine Phosphate and Fertilizer Corp.

The disposition of assets like these was not hampered by negative or sluggish growth in the country's gross domestic product, as this was positive, according to the World Bank's Klingebiel.

"Rather, the disposition efforts of this agency were hampered by a variety of reasons, most important of which was the type of assets transferred—politically motivated and fraudulent loans," she said.

The APT, as a government entity itself, had limited independence. It was susceptible to political pressure, said Klingebiel, and "was not equipped to resolving assets whose initial extension was based more on political connections than due diligence on the merits of the projects to be financed."

"Asset disposition was also hampered by a weak legal framework," she added.

Broader failure

The APT was also not successful in achieving its broader objectives—helping to build a more robust banking system. The Philippine National Bank, one of the two banks that were supposedly cleaned up by the APT, appears to be in financial distress again.

The bank is bleeding heavily as 40 percent of its total loan portfolio consists of bad loans. It is burdened by a high level of non-performing assets and worn out by a significantly reduced deposit base, and at least P25 billion in debts it owed the government.

In addition, weak governance and insufficient funding hampered the APT's operations.

"The agency was neither privately managed nor an independent agency, and budgetary pressures—avoidance to reveal losses—reduced its commitment towards rapid sale," Klingbiel wrote.

"While the APT had to submit quarterly reports on performance and financial status to the President and Congress, it did not disclose information on its activities and financial situations to the public, and the process of asset sales remained non-transparent," she explained.

Cautionary tale

The country's dismal experience with the APT should serve as a cautionary tale to the Macapagal administration's recent efforts to let asset management companies deal with the banking system's growing bad-loans problem.

US-based international bank Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc. is setting up a $1-billion "Philippine Recovery Bank" to buy non-performing loans of the country's commercial banks and government financial institutions and build middle-class and low-income housing.

Two other international banks—Merrill Lynch and Goldman Sachs—were also planning to buy and sell some bad loans. The World Bank's International Finance Corp. is also in on the plan.

Congress, meanwhile, is preparing a set of laws to pave the way for foreign investors to buy up ballooning bad loans at local banks.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura said he was confident laws covering the purchase of bad loans could be in place by March.

These laws, he said, were needed to make non-performing loans attractive to buyers and clear up any legal questions over such loan transfers.

Among the laws being prepared in Congress is one allowing the establishment of AMCs to absorb NPLs. Another proposed law will delineate rules covering corporate bankruptcies and the restructuring of such firms.

"Clearly in the case of the NPLs, the rules of the game have to be spelled out so there is no misunderstanding in terms of what is taxable, what is not taxable, what is subject to fees, what is subject to transfer taxes and all that," Buenaventura said.

He said such "friction costs" incurred when an asset was transferred from one company to another could amount to as much as 10 percent of the cost, making it unprofitable to buy NPLs.

Even the issue of whether foreigners can own property, even temporarily, has to be cleared up. Local laws ban foreigners from owning land and other selected real estate. This could technically prevent a foreign firm from holding a foreclosed asset.

AFTER/ C6

Deutsche Bank addresses cash management challenges

MICHAEL Hellbeck, chief country officer, Deutsche Bank

DEUTSCHE Bank hosted an event titled, "Moving Forward," in Manila as part of a series of Deutsche Bank-sponsored forums to discuss cash management trends and challenges currently faced by corporations in Asia.

The discussion highlighted key issues that the adoption of the Internet is raising for cash management clients.

"As technology continues to evolve and create new ways of doing business, Web enablement presents both opportunities and challenges for cash management service providers. Cash management banks have to provide tangible value for the business models of their customers who continue to focus on shareholder satisfaction," says Jimmy Yap, Asia-Pacific Head for Global Cash Management for Corporates, Deutsche Bank.

The discussion highlighted cash management solutions that leverage Deutsche Bank's highly secured environment.

For instance, the Bank featured its business-to-business electronic bill presentment and payment system, db-eBills. Corporate customers using db-eBills for billing will gain immediate advantages, including improved customer service and dispute resolution, reduced costs and a more efficient collections cycle.

Payers will benefit from a system whose workflow tools facilitate easy adaptation to existing business processes and payment methods appropriate to local business practices.

Db-eBills was first deployed in Asia in July 2000 and a new, significantly enhanced global platform, hosted by Deutsche Bank, will be progressively rolled out in Asia early next year. The Bank will begin to offer this product in the Philippines after all local regulatory requirements are fully met.

In the Asia-Pacific, Deutsche Bank employs more than 7,200 staff with offices in 15 countries. In the Philippines, Deutsche Bank employs around 120 staff. Through its branch in Manila, Deutsche Bank offers its clients a range of corporate, investment and private banking products and services.

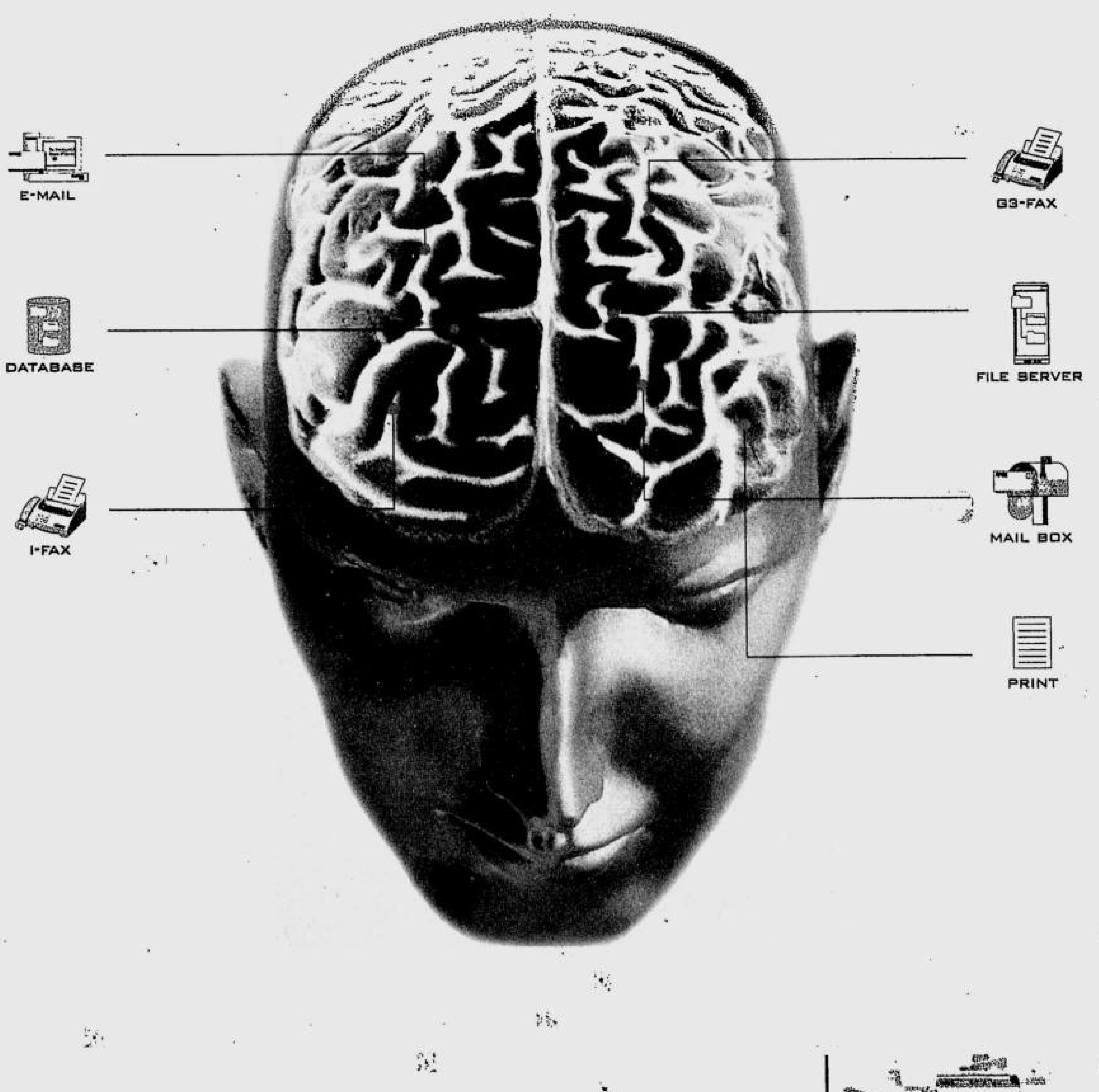
(From left) **WALTER** Poick of Asian Development Bank and Hubert Neiss, chair, Asia-Pacific, Deutsche Bank

(From left) **TIMMY** De Los Reyes, head of Financial Institutions of Deutsche Bank; Ramon Rodriguez, Multinational Bancorp.; and Gerry Ablaza, Globe Telecom

(From left) **EDWARD** Mueller, PAGS Globe Ground; Ulrich Geidel, Lufthansa Technik Phil.; Sabine Trenk, PAGS terminals Inc.; Dr. Detlef Reis, Relationship manager of Deutsche Bank

(From left) **NONA** Torres, Alaska Milk Corp.; Mayet Caparas, senior relationship manager, Deutsche bank; Jimmy Yap, head of global cash management, Deutsche bank, Asia-Pacific; Belinda Madrid, head of global cash management, Deutsche bank; and Fred Uytengsu, Alaska Milk Corp.

(From left) **GIL** Castro, senior implementation manager of Deutsche Bank; Evelyn Dandan, KLM; Ann Lautchang, KLM; Malyn Sarino, KLM; and Mario Navalta, Japan Airlines



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After APT flop, will RP make it this time?

(From page C5)

Not the same

The Makati Business Club believes that Lehman Brothers' $1-billion recovery fund and similar initiatives to clean up the banking system's bad loans will not go the way of the APT.

"The APT was a creation of the government. It is, in fact, a government financial institution," MBC executive director Guillermo Luz said.

He said Lehman Brothers' initiative, unlike the APT, would be a private endeavor and would, therefore, be beyond the government's influence.

Although Lehman Brothers had offered to acquire the bad loans of corporations where the government had a significant stake, it was "not obligated at all to get it."

Lehman Brothers and other institutions planning to put up asset disposition units "won't be influenced politically," he said. "They will come in and get what they want. They may not even touch government financial institutions, but they'll look and see what they can do."

Just the same, he said the business community was "watching very closely how the AMC bills are coming along."

One thorny issue has been pricing. Local banks have been unwilling to unload their non-performing assets because of the huge discounts that international banks like Lehman Brothers, Merrill Lynch and Goldman Sachs are demanding.

Most AMCs are foreign banks or institutions that acquire bad loans of distressed local banks at an 80-percent discount. This means that for P1 million worth of non-performing loans they acquire, AMCs pay a bank only P200,000. They keep the rest for themselves.

"These are pretty big discounts, but at some point in time, individual banks may have to make their own decision whether they go with it or not," Luz said.

"Both banks and AMCs will have to come to a determination as to what is the fairest price for the portfolios. At the moment, it looks like a deep discount, but given the shape of the economy, it's a matter of time that they'll come to an agreement," he added.

Are you poor, middle class or rich?

(From page C8)

minimum amount to be rich is seen as about three times the subjective poverty line.

Poor, middle class, rich

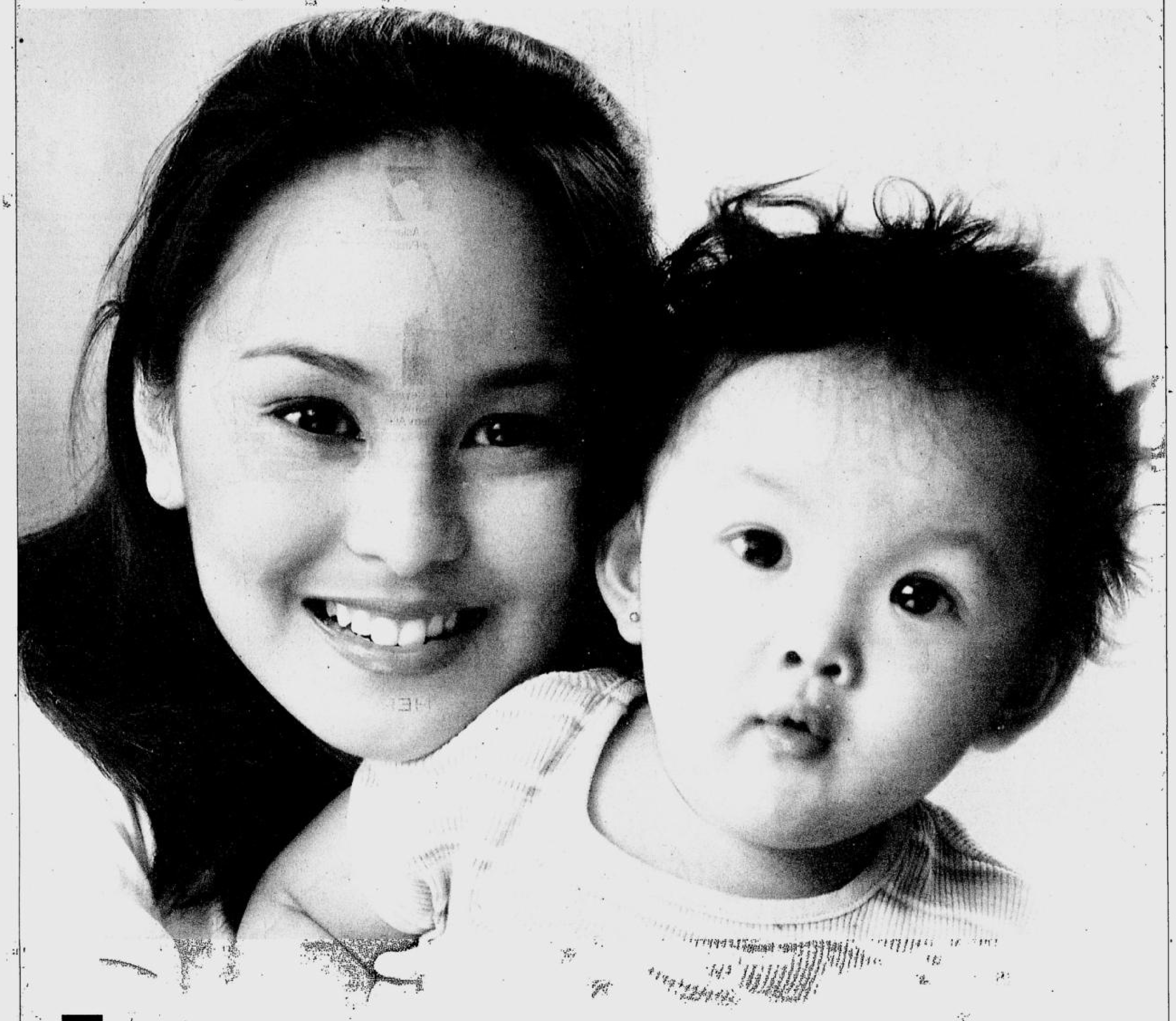
The subjective affluence threshold tends to rise the higher the educational attainment of the household head. Here are the mean affluence thresholds:

Some elementary education	P18,358
Completed elementary	22,443
Some high school	22,752
Completed high school	25,230
Some college	36,491
Completed college	60,155

All told, who do the people regard as the poor, the middle class, the rich?

Based on the SWS July 2000 survey, if your family has a total monthly income below P9,767 per month, you are probably poor. If your income is above that, but below P30,334, your family is likely to be middle class.

If your monthly family income is above P30,334 you are probably rich.



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22	5,552	552	5,000	11,104	1,050	11,550	111,550
23	5,552	552	5,000	16,656	1,655	18,205	118,205
24	5,552	552	5,000	22,208	2,321	25,526	125,526
25	5,552	552	5,000	27,760	3,053	33,579	133,579
26	5,552	575	4,977	33,312	3,856	42,412	142,412
27	5,552	575	4,977	38,864	4,739	52,128	152,128
28	5,552	575	4,977	44,416	5,711	62,816	162,816
29	5,552	575	4,977	49,968	6,779	74,572	174,572
30	5,552	575	4,977	55,520	7,955	87,504	187,504
31	5,552	620	4,932	61,072	9,244	101,680	201,680
32	5,552	620	4,932	66,624	10,661	117,273	217,273
33	5,552	620	4,932	72,176	12,221	134,426	234,426
34	5,552	620	4,932	77,728	13,936	153,294	253,294
35	5,552	620	4,932	83,280	15,823	174,049	274,049
36	5,552	725	4,827	88,832	17,888	196,764	296,764
37	5,552	725	4,827	94,384	20,159	221,750	321,750
38	5,552	725	4,827	99,936	22,658	249,235	349,235
39	5,552	725	4,827	105,488	25,406	279,468	379,468
40	5,552	725	4,827	111,040	28,430	312,725	412,725
41	5,552	951	4,601	116,592	31,733	349,059	449,059
42	5,552	951	4,601	122,144	35,366	389,026	489,026
43	5,552	951	4,601	127,696	39,363	432,990	532,990
44	5,552	951	4,601	133,248	43,759	481,350	581,350
45	5,552	951	4,601	138,800	48,595	534,546	634,546
46	5,552	1,318	4,234	144,352	53,878	592,658	692,658
47	5,552	1,318	4,234	149,904	59,689	656,581	756,581
48	5,552	1,318	4,234	155,456	66,082	726,897	826,897
49	5,552	1,318	4,234	161,008	73,113	804,244	904,244
50	5,552	1,318	4,234	166,560	80,848	889,326	989,326
51	5,552	1,909	3,643	172,112	89,297	982,266	1,082,266
52	5,552	1,909	3,643	177,664	98,591	1,084,500	1,184,500
53	5,552	1,909	3,643	183,216	108,814	1,196,957	1,296,957
54	5,552	1,909	3,643	188,768	120,060	1,320,660	1,420,660
55	5,552	1,909	3,643	194,320	132,430	1,456,733	1,556,733
56	5,552	2,831	2,721	199,872	145,945	1,605,399	1,705,399
57	5,552	2,831	2,721	205,424	160,812	1,768,932	1,868,932
58	5,552	2,831	2,721	210,976	177,165	1,948,818	2,048,818
59	5,552	2,831	2,721	216,528	195,154	2,146,693	2,246,693
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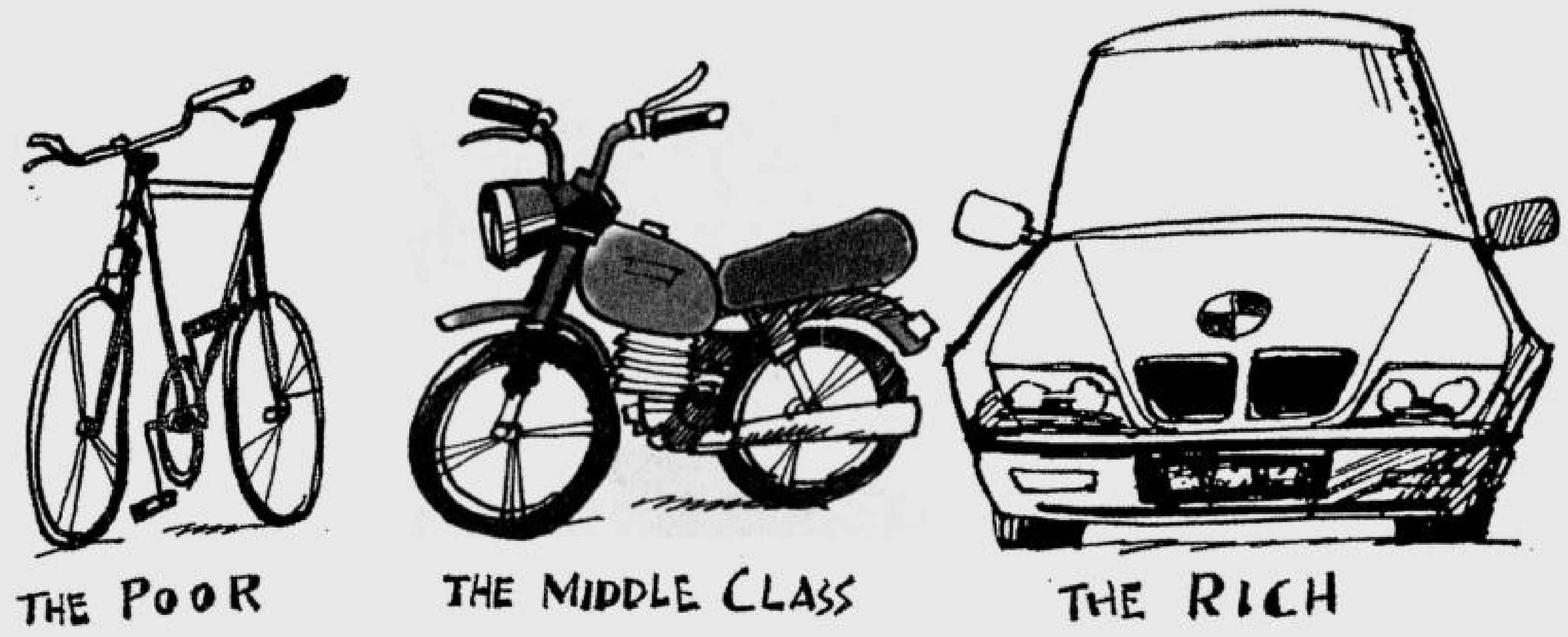
Are you poor, middle class or rich?

By Dennis M. Arroyo



HOW are Filipinos classified by economic status? One way is to look at dwellings; for years many survey groups have used houses to group families.

This is one example of a rating system:

"Class AB, upper class. Made of heavy/high quality materials, very well constructed, well-painted, generally with a lawn or garden, located in an expensive neighborhood, with expensive furnishings; Class C, middle class. Made of mixed heavy and light materials, well-constructed, painted, may or may not have a garden, adequate furnishing but not necessarily expensive; Class D, lower class. Very light, cheap materials, poorly constructed, generally no garden, scanty furniture, located in shabby surroundings; Class E, extreme lower class. A *barong-barong* (shanty) type of dwelling or a one-room affair in a poorly constructed house, dilapidated, bare with hardly any furniture, located in slum districts or interiors."

Rating one's family

Surveys abroad get public views on how families rate their own economic standing. Polls in Europe present this question:

"Taking everything into account, at about what level is your family situated as far as standard of living is concerned? You may answer by giving a figure between 1 and 7—number 1 means a poor family and number 7 a rich family."

A Filipino equivalent has long been in use. Social Weather Stations (SWS) takes a reading of subjective poverty by presenting a card with the word Mahirap (Poor) on one half and Hindi Mahirap (Not Poor) on the other half.

Where on the card does the respondent rate his family? Those who point to the Mahirap section are counted as the self-rated poor.

In the July 2000 national survey, 54 percent rated themselves as poor.

Poverty lines

Those who rate themselves as poor are asked this follow-up question:

"How much would your family need for home expenses each month in order not to feel poor anymore?"

Those who self-rate as not poor are asked a slightly different question:

"How much would a family, of the same size as yours, but which felt it was poor, need for home expenses each month in order not to feel poor anymore?"

The questions result in an array of poverty lines, or subjective poverty thresholds. SWS summarizes the distribution by getting their means (averages) and their medians.

My source is a paper of Dr. Mahar Mangahas, president of SWS. He presented his findings in the Berlin, October 2000 conference of the International Sociological Association.

The following were the mean poverty thresholds of the SWS July 2000 national survey.

Philippines	P9,767+
Class ABC	17,981
Class D	9,396
Class E	6,295

And here are the median poverty thresholds.

Philippines	P6,000
Class ABC	15,000
Class D	7,000
Class E	5,000

These questions are similar to those used in the United States and other countries. A staple is the minimum income question:

"Living where you do now, and meeting the expenses you consider necessary, what would be the smallest income you and your family would need to make ends meet?"

Minimum to be rich

Research on affluence is rare in the Philippines. And for good reason—studying poverty to fight it is a much more urgent concern than looking into affluence.

SWS has investigated the affluence threshold. Here is the English translation of the original Tagalog question.

"Now let us talk about the word 'rich' (in the Tagalog questionnaire, MAYAMAN). For a family as large as yours, how much in your opinion is the least amount of money for monthly home expenses, such that, if they had it, they could be called a rich family?"

The question yielded a distribution of amounts. SWS got the means and the medians to summarize the distribution.

The means are listed as follows:

Philippines	P30,334
Class ABC	56,335
Class D	28,973
Class E	19,758

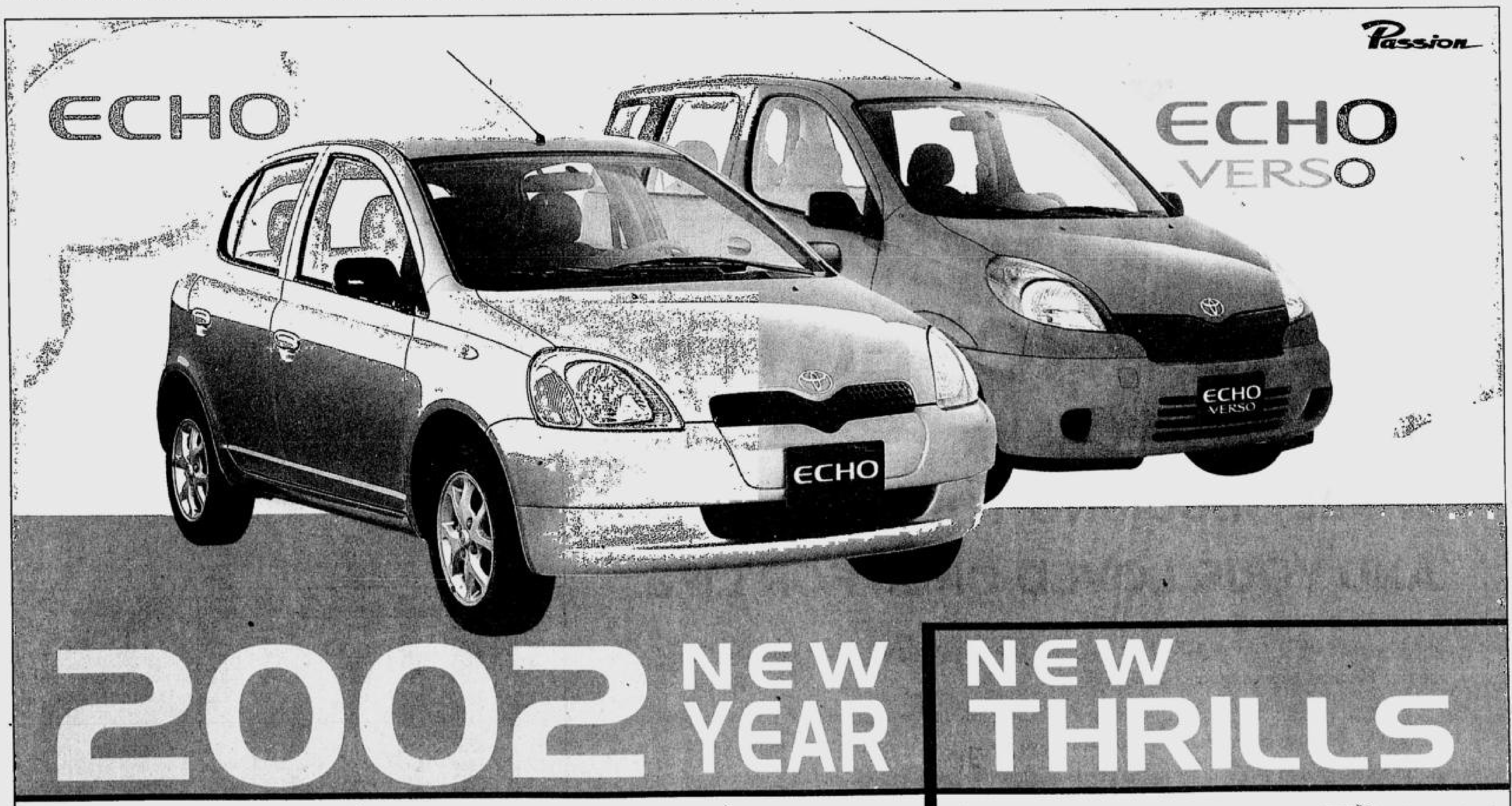
That is, the affluence thresholds, as seen by class ABC (the rich and the middle class), is P56,335.

Here are the medians.

Philippines	P20,000
Class ABC	40,000
Class D	20,000
Class E	15,000.

For both the means and the medians, and for all classes, the affluence thresholds were around three times the poverty thresholds. The

ARE/ C6



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40%	255,600	29,935	20,643	16,165	11,557	9,279
50%	319,500	24,198	16,686	13,067	9,342	7,500

LOW DOWNPAYMENT SCHEME

%DP	Low DP	12	18	24	36	48
20%	77,800	45,899	31,651	24,786	17,721	14,227
30%	141,700	40,162	27,695	21,688	15,506	12,449
40%	205,600	34,424	23,738	18,590	13,291	10,670
50%	269,500	28,687	19,782	15,491	11,076	8,892

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LIFESTYLE

CHELO BANAL-FORMOSO, Editor
LITO B. ZULUETA, Subsection Editor

Arts & Design

Yearlong tribute to Atang de la Rama, first Filipina film star and multimedia personality

She was the first superstar, dominating theater, recording, cinema, TV and radio, and even political activism

NATIONAL Artist Honorata de la Rama

BY RODOLFO A.G. SILVESTSE JR.
Contributor

ATANG de la Rama, recognized in her lifetime as the Queen of Kundiman and Zarzuela, once again takes the spotlight when art patron Danny Dolor and the Tribung Pilipino Cultural Foundation pay tribute to the late National Artist in commemoration of her birth centenary this year with a series of concerts and concert-lectures in the country's key cities and provincial capitals.

To open the yearlong celebration, the foundation will be presenting "Handog Kay Atang," a showcase featuring traditional Filipino music, at the CCP Tanghalang Aurelio Tolentino on Jan. 10, 4:30 p.m. Interpreting the songs immortalized by Ka Atang and other famous hits of yesteryears is coloratura soprano Ma. Rachelle Gerodias, with soprano Liza Cabahug and tenor Lemuel dela Cruz as guest artists, and pianist Julie Mendoza providing the accompaniment.

Dolor, a close friend of Ka Atang, also produced in 1979 a Tribung Pinoy concert in honor of the Philippines' first actress to appear on the silver screen, in the country's first full-length movie "Dalagang Bukid," an adaptation of the *zarzuela* of the same title where she appeared in no less than 724 performances.

"I consider it a privilege to have been touched by Ka Atang in her latter years, which gave me the opportunity to listen to her recollection of the triumphs she experienced in her career," says Dolor.

YEARLONG/ p.D3

SOPRANO Rachelle Gerodias

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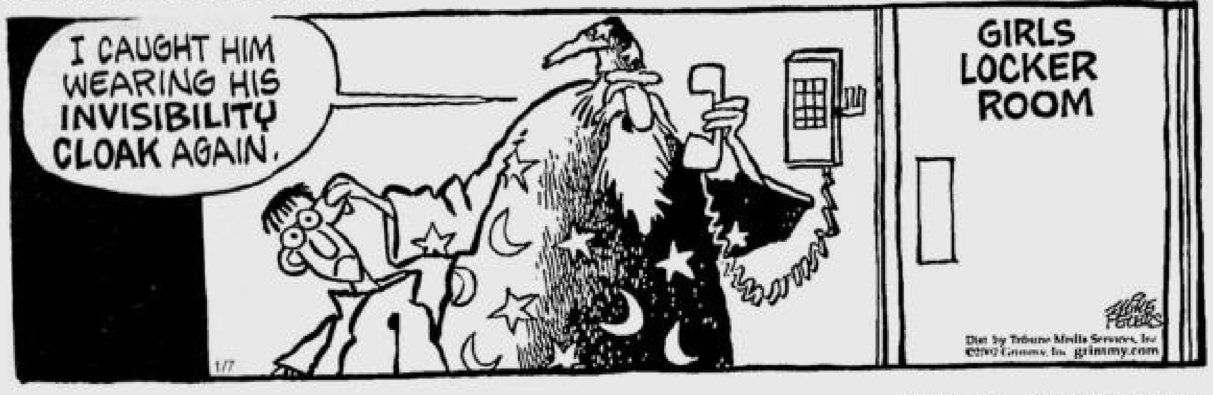
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS


I CAUGHT HIM WEARING HIS INVISIBILITY CLOAK AGAIN.
GIRLS LOCKER ROOM
1/7
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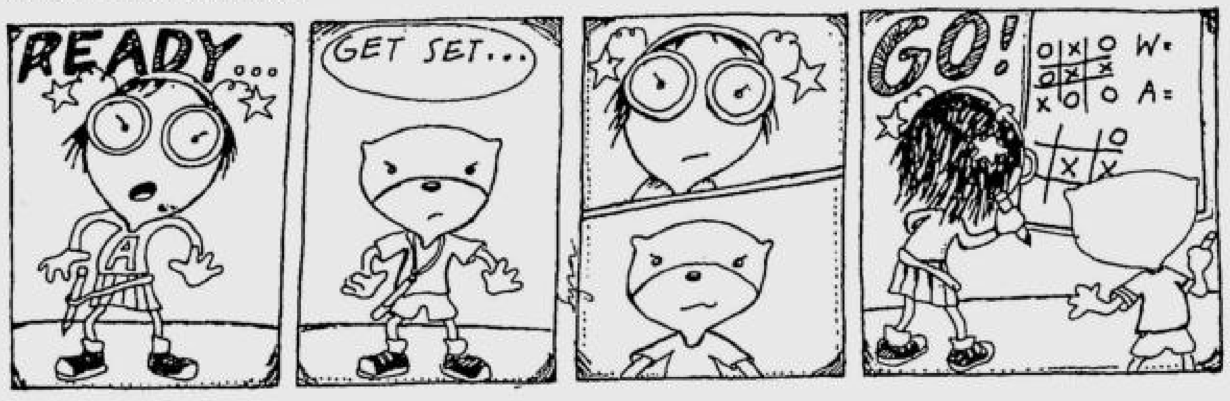
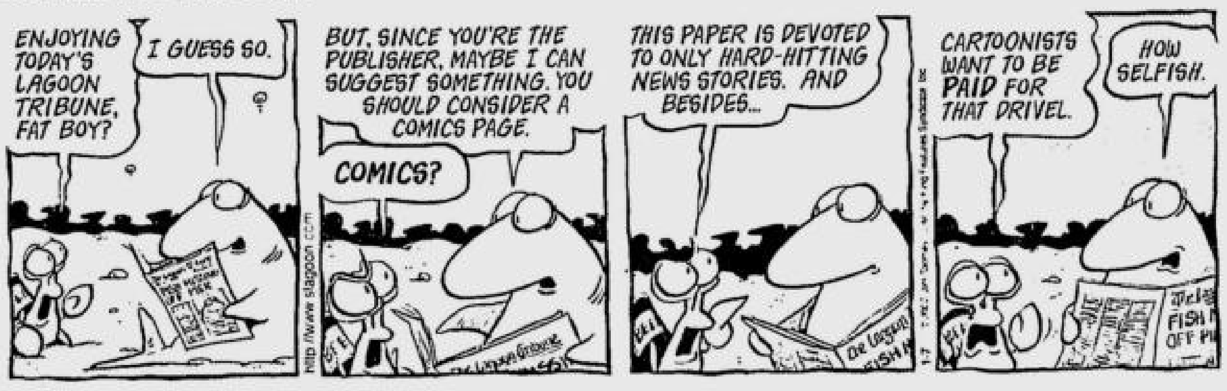
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


READY...
GET SET...
GO!
W=
A=

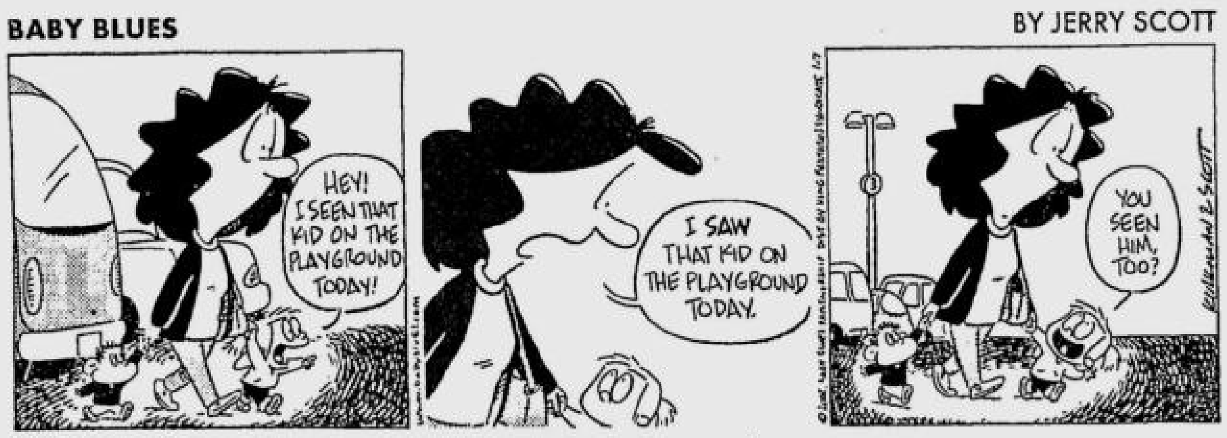
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


ENJOYING TODAY'S LAGOON TRIBUNE, FAT BOY?
I GUESS SO.
BUT, SINCE YOU'RE THE PUBLISHER, MAYBE I CAN SUGGEST SOMETHING. YOU SHOULD CONSIDER A COMICS PAGE.
COMICS?
THIS PAPER IS DEVOTED TO ONLY HARD-HITTING NEWS STORIES. AND BESIDES...
CARTOONISTS WANT TO BE PAID FOR THAT DRIVEL.
HOW SELFISH.
http://www.slagoon.com

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


HEY! I SEEN THAT KID ON THE PLAYGROUND TODAY!
I SAW THAT KID ON THE PLAYGROUND TODAY.
YOU SEEN HIM, TOO?
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Nicolas Cage, Kenny Loggins, Katie Couric, David Yost

Happy Birthday: You must rely on yourself and your own efforts if you really want to make positive moves this year. Offers that sound too good to be true may be tempting but not likely to pan out. Your numbers are 6, 11, 18, 22, 26, 31, 38

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Your quick wit and energetic attitude will attract a lot of attention today. You will find yourself making closer connections to people you work with.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): New opportunities will develop through friends and colleagues. You will find yourself in an opportune position if you want to make changes to your career and your home.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Let your creative talent flow. You have a gift when it comes to communication and you must not hold back if you have something important to say.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): This is not the day to pick a fight with someone you care about. You may be a little disgruntled but that doesn't mean that you should take it out on others.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You will have no trouble wrapping others around your finger. Your charming manner and entertaining personality help others to see things your way.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Sudden changes may throw you for a loop but if you are willing to ride the storm you will find yourself sitting in a pretty good position.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Focus on what you can do rather than what you can't. You must work with the people most likely to further your cause and avoid dealing with those who are negative or unwilling to lift a finger.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Don't be too sure about a deal that you are involved in. It is best to ask questions as well as doing a little investigative research yourself before you proceed.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): If you decide that you want to promote something that you believe in you should do it without hesitation. The people around you will be eager to listen and quick to respond.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Focus on your job. If you want to make changes, go for interviews or send out your resumé. You may find that someone you currently work with is holding you back.

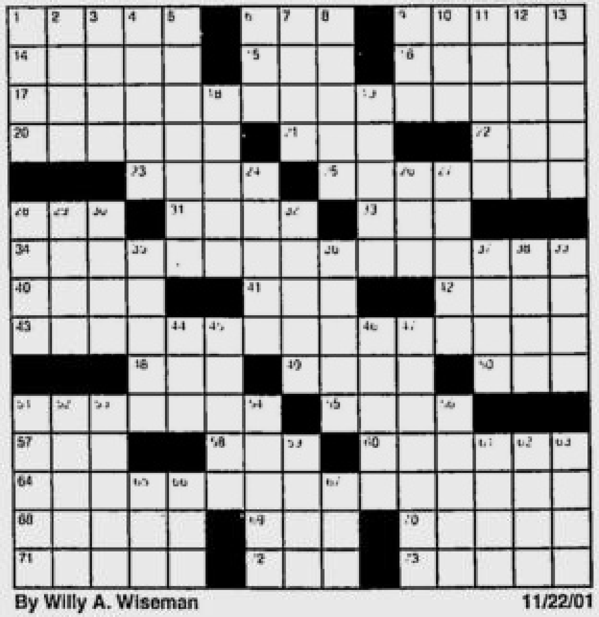
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Travel and educational pursuits will be in your best interest. You will pick up valuable information if you listen to someone you respect and admire.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Deals can be made if you seize the moment and act fast. Take care of matters that concern older relatives. A lack of sympathy may cause some tension at home.

Birthday Baby: You have so many things going on in your head. You are inventive, curious and quite willing to experiment. You have a great deal of warmth and charm and you put others at ease.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com



By Willy A. Wiseman
New York, NY

11/22/01

ACROSS
1 Rot-resistant wood
6 __ in the bag!
9 Abrasive tools
14 Roanne's river
15 Old card game
16 Become swollen
17 Turkey
20 Nissan model
21 Bro's sibling
22 Small drink
23 One of the Chaplins
25 Female lead
28 End of a cigar
31 Copper coin
33 Promissory note
34 Turkey
40 Ripped
41 Ring of flowers
42 Be an omen of
43 Turkey
48 Trigger's holder
49 Narrow cut
50 Still
51 Friml and Nureyev
55 Seed cover
57 Writer Umberto
58 Penguinlike bird
60 Catches
64 Turkey
68 '68 and '74 Indy winner Bobby
69 McKellen of "Bent"
70 Tedium
71 '77 and '78 Indy winner Tom
72 Remnant
73 Painter of ballerinas

DOWN
1 Priestly robes
2 Traditional tales
3 __ and the Belmonts
4 Muse of poetry
5 Triassic sandstone
6 Stevedores' grp.
7 "__ in the Attic"
8 Bulgaria's capital
9 Slugger's stat
10 Everyone
11 Drunkard
12 Helen's abductor
13 Staircase
18 Diminishes
19 Computer language std.
24 __-Saxon
26 Heavy weight
27 Sport named for a school
28 Bus. letter abbr.
29 MacNelly strip
30 Spy Mata
32 Concert hall levels
35 Bolivian black
36 String quartet member
37 British Conservative
38 Garfield's pal
39 Lion's fare
44 4th of July, e.g.
45 To the most extreme degree
46 Initial
47 Was sparing with
51 Picture puzzle
52 Sch. in Storrs
53 Use a divining rod
54 1957 hit, "Wake Up Little __"
56 Port near Belfast
59 Aga __ III
61 Writer Lardner
62 S. Amer. nation
63 Roof-rack tote
65 Exod. follower
66 Stretch of time
67 Plus

SATURDAY PUZZLE ANSWER

T	A	S	S	O	■	L	E	M	S	■	G	I	S	T
I	D	L	E	D	■	I	L	I	A	■	A	N	N	E
M	O	R	E	O	R	L	E	S	S	■	S	T	E	N
■	■	■	P	R	E	A	C	H	■	A	S	H	E	S
L	E	V	I	■	O	C	T	A	■	D	E	E	R	E
A	L	E	E	■	S	T	R	■	N	O	R	A	■	■
M	E	R	R	Y	■	R	A	W	E	R	■	R	H	O
A	N	Y	■	E	R	E	■	E	W	E	■	E	E	G
S	A	C	■	A	C	E	R	B	■	S	T	A	L	L
■	■	L	Y	R	A	■	E	S	L	■	R	O	L	E
S	H	O	A	L	■	A	G	U	E	■	U	F	O	S
M	U	S	H	Y	■	T	A	R	I	F	F	■	■	■
O	R	E	O	■	N	O	T	F	A	R	F	R	O	M
T	O	T	O	■	A	N	T	E	■	A	L	O	N	E
E	N	O	S	■	H	E	A	R	■	T	E	N	O	N

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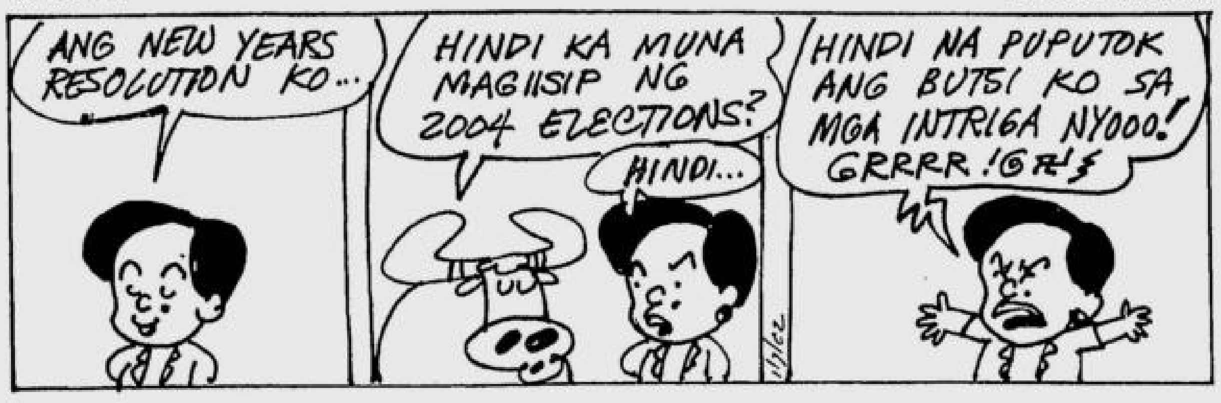
11/22/01

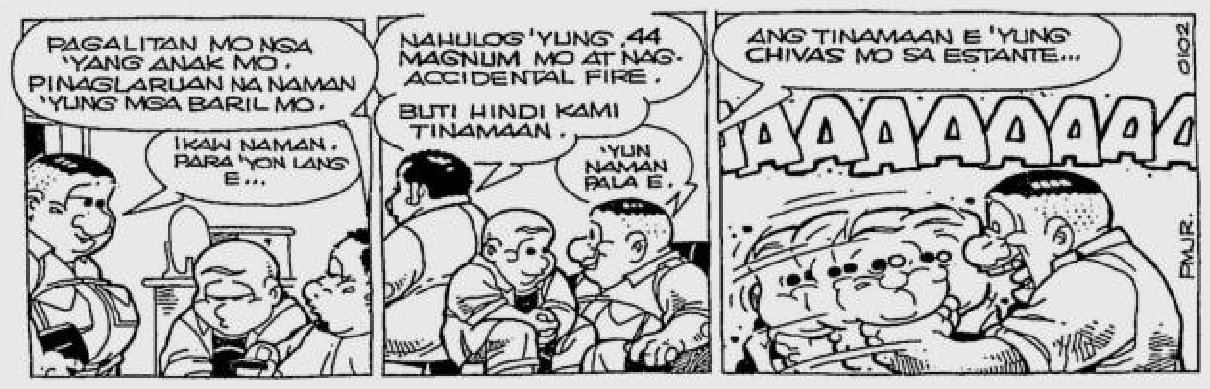
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


ANG NEW YEARS RESOLUTION KO...
HINDI KA MUNA MAGIISIP NG 2004 ELECTIONS?
HINDI...
HINDI NA PUPUTOK ANG BUTSI KO SA MGA INTRIGA NYOOO! GRRRR!

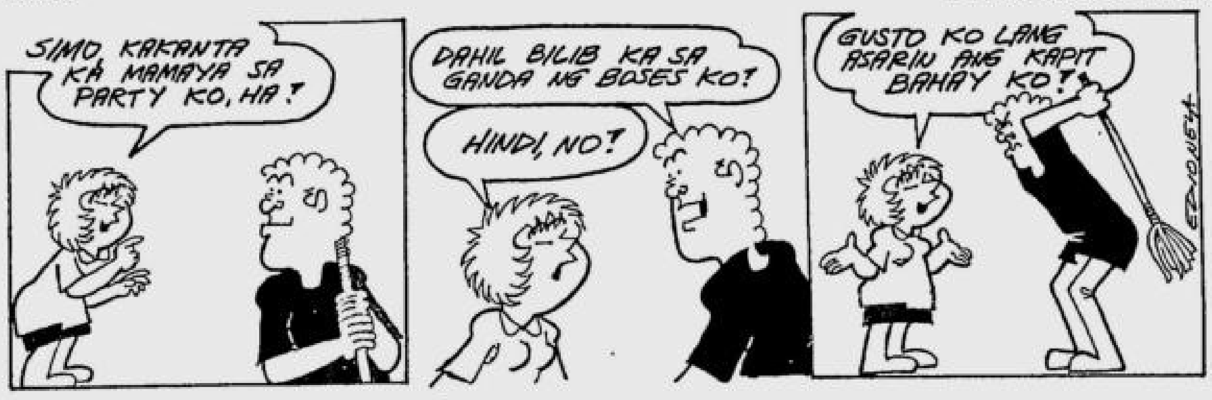
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


PAGALITAN MO NGA 'YANG ANAK MO. PINAGLARUAN NA NAMAN 'YUNG MGA BARIL MO.
IKAW NAMAN. PARA 'YON LANG E...
NAHULOG 'YUNG .44 MAGNUM MO AT NAG-ACCIDENTAL FIRE.
BUTI HINDI KAMI TINAMAAN.
'YUN NAMAN PALA E.
ANG TINAMAAN E 'YUNG CHIVAS MO SA ESTANTE...
AAAAAAAAA
0102
PMJR.

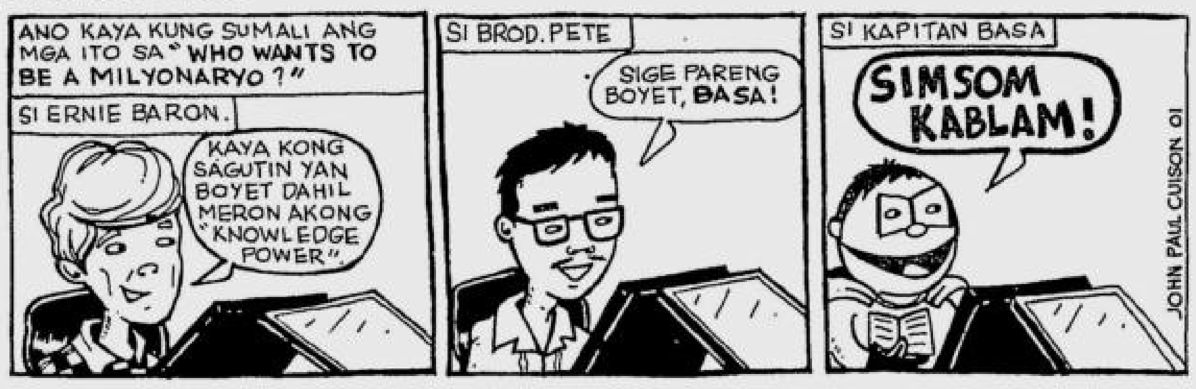
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


SIMO, KAKANTA KA MAMAYA SA PARTY KO, HA?
DAHIL BILIB KA SA GANDA NG BOSES KO?
HINDI, NO?
GUSTO KO LANG ASARIN ANG KAPIT BAHAY KO?
EDIONELA

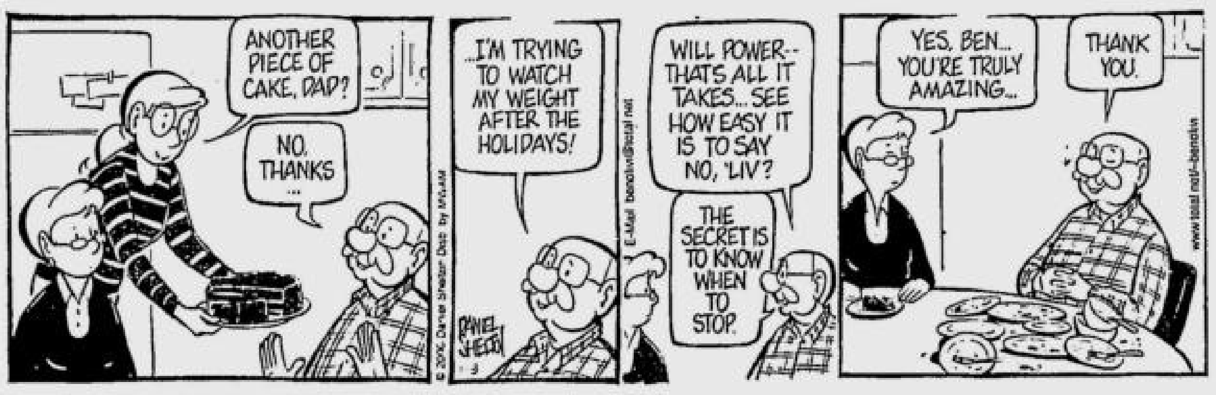
GARAPATA BLOOD

BY JOHN PAUL CUISON


ANO KAYA KUNG SUMALI ANG MGA ITO SA "WHO WANTS TO BE A MILYONARYO?"
SI ERNIE BARON.
KAYA KONG SAGUTIN YAN BOYET DAHIL MERON AKONG "KNOWLEDGE POWER".
SI BROD. PETE
SIGE PARENG BOYET, BASA!
SI KAPITAN BASA
SIMSOM KABLAM!
JOHN PAUL CUISON 01

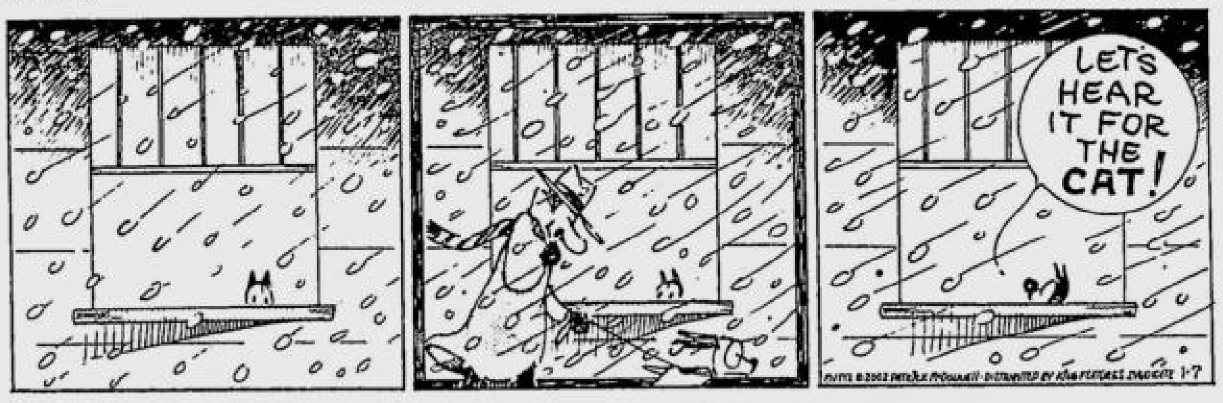
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


ANOTHER PIECE OF CAKE, DAD?
NO. THANKS ...
...I'M TRYING TO WATCH MY WEIGHT AFTER THE HOLIDAYS!
WILL POWER-- THAT'S ALL IT TAKES... SEE HOW EASY IT IS TO SAY NO, 'LIV?
THE SECRET IS TO KNOW WHEN TO STOP.
YES, BEN... YOU'RE TRULY AMAZING...
THANK YOU.
DANIEL SHELTON

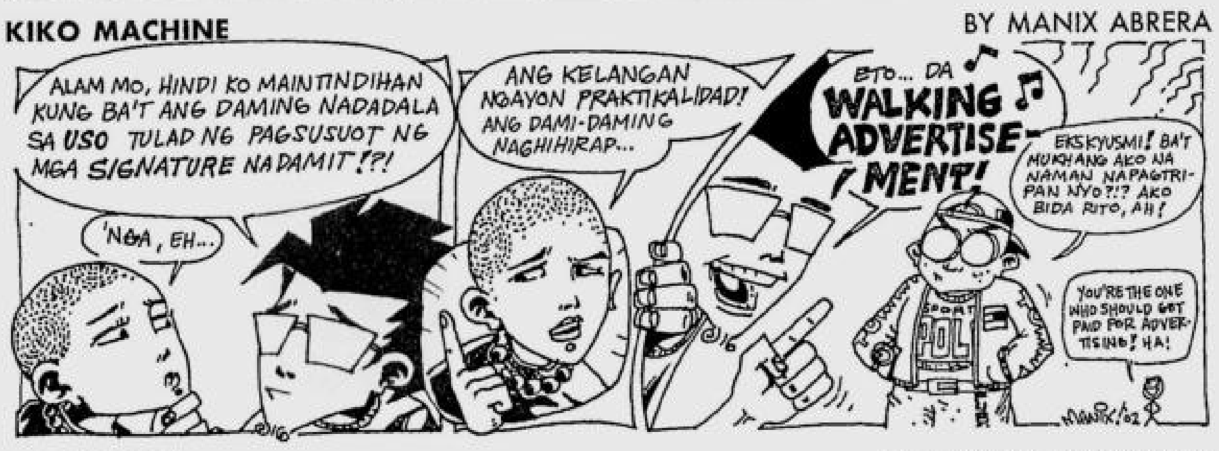
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE CAT!
1-7

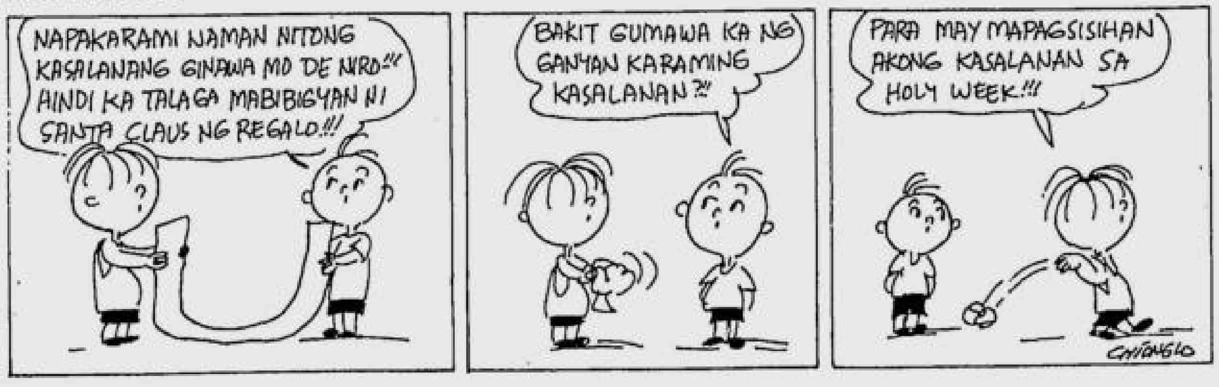
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


ALAM MO, HINDI KO MAINTINDIHAN KUNG BA'T ANG DAMING NADADALA SA USO TULAD NG PAGSUSUOT NG MGA SIGNATURE NADAMIT!?!
'NGA, EH...
ANG KELANGAN NGAYON PRAKTIKALIDAD! ANG DAMI-DAMING NAGHIHIRAP...
ETO... DA WALKING ADVERTISE-MENT!
EKSKYUSMI! BA'T MUKHANG AKO NA NAMAN NAPAGTRIPAN NYO?!? AKO BIDA RITO, AH!
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SHOULD GET PAID FOR ADVERTISING! HA!
MANIX/02

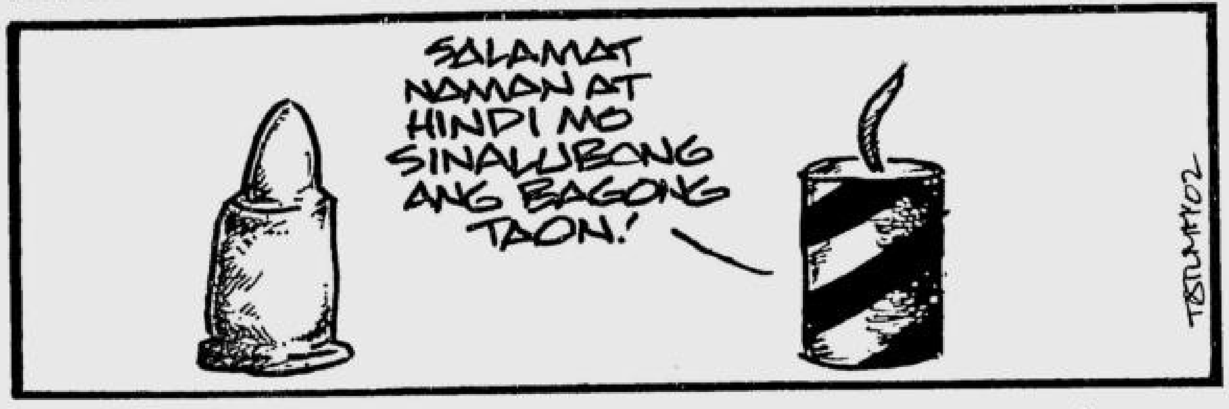
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


NAPAKARAMI NAMAN NITONG KASALANANG GINAWA MO DE NIRO!!! HINDI KA TALAGA MABIBIGYAN NI SANTA CLAUS NG REGALO!!!
BAKIT GUMAWA KA NG GANYAN KARAMING KASALANAN?!!
PARA MAY MAPAGSISIHAN AKONG KASALANAN SA HOLY WEEK!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU & TITO MILAMBILING


SALAMAT NAMAN AT HINDI MO SINALUBONG ANG BAGONG TAON!
TBLUMMY02

Yearlong tribute to Atang de la Rama

(From page D1)

A recipient of the first "Dangal ng Haraya," a lifetime achievement award bestowed by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, Dolor stresses that "the commemoration of Ka Atang's centennial has been conceptualized in keeping with her lifelong dedication to the propagation of Philippine traditional music both here and abroad, among all levels of society, whether in Manila's upper class venues such as the era's foremost playhouses, Manila Hotel and Malacañang Palace, or in decrepit and makeshift stages in cockpits, church yards and tribal villages in the provinces. It will be recalled that she was the first among all Filipino performers to travel to foreign shores to bring cheer to Filipino plantation workers as well as the jobless ones who were living miserable lives. Her concerts brought her to Hong Kong, Shanghai, Japan, India, Pakistan, Los Angeles, New York and Hawaii where she proudly introduced the *kundiman*.

The Tribung Pilipino Cultural Foundation, for its part, will invite to the CCP concert students from Manila's public schools who, "at this stage in their lives, need to be exposed to Philippine music, inundated as they are by foreign compositions that alienate them from the true Filipino soul and identity," says out Dolor.

Ka Atang was born on Jan. 11, 1902 and finished pharmacy at the Centro Escolar de Señoritas despite her busy schedule as a young artist. It is, however, in the field of music that she would forge a remarkable career that spanned the whole gamut of artistic forms and media, ranging from the *zarzuela* to vaudeville, stage show, cinema, radio and, much later, even television, where she was in documentaries on Philippine music.

Music lovers, aficionados and scholars, of course, remember Ka Atang for her rendition of such all-time favorites as the naughty "Nabasag ang Banga" from the long-running *zarzuela* "Dalagang Bukid," and her signature song, "Bituing Marikit," especially composed for her by National Artist Nicanor Abelardo. Interestingly, she rendered the two songs in the 1979 Tribung Pinoy tribute in her honor, the last time ever she would perform in public.

In 1987, President Corazon C. Aquino bestowed on Honorata "Atang" de la Rama the National Artist Award in recognition of her "preeminent excellence and genius in the field of music and her distinct contribution to the nation's artistic heritage."

DE LA RAMA AT HER PEAK: Superstar and feminist

At a time when the Filipina takes center stage in the nation's consciousness in the light of changing perceptions as to her role in society, the commemoration of Ka Atang's centennial should serve as an inspiration to women in search of the appropriate venue for their creativity and leadership. In her lifetime, Ka Atang had been both a devoted wife and partner to the labor leader and poet Amado Hernandez, himself a National Artist, and embraced the causes of her beloved by singing at labor rallies and meetings of the underground movement during the American and Japanese periods and later in the post-war assemblies of activist youth, workers and women. When her husband was imprisoned for rebellion in the 1950s (he was jailed for 13 years), the indefatigable lady supported her family by hosting her own radio program, even as she secretly encouraged her husband to continue with his writings by smuggling in pen and paper to his prison cell. Ka Atang thus espoused dignity of labor, freedom and nationalism, especially by expressing them through the traditional Filipino music that she personally championed to the last days of her fruitful life.

Sansó at Drawing Room, Manalang at West Gallery

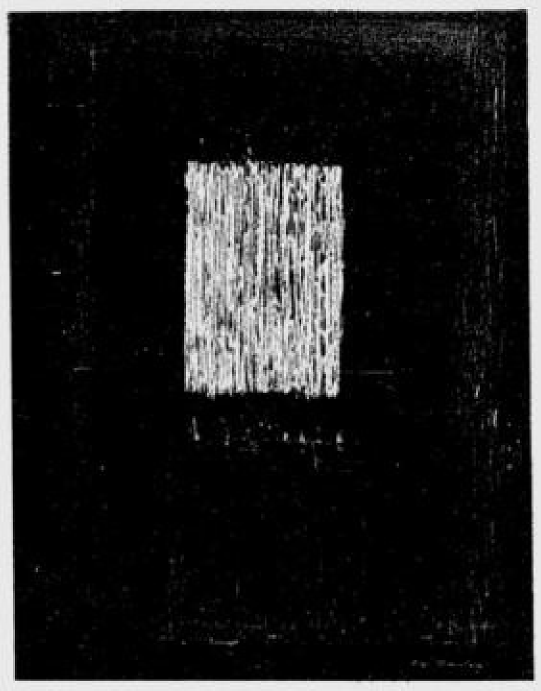
PARIS-BASED Juvenal Sansó is exhibiting his latest black-and-white drawings at the Drawing Room (Metrostar Building, 1007 Metropolitan Avenue, Makati City) from Jan. 19 to Feb.6. The show displays the artist's continuing passion for black and white. Call 897-6990/7877.

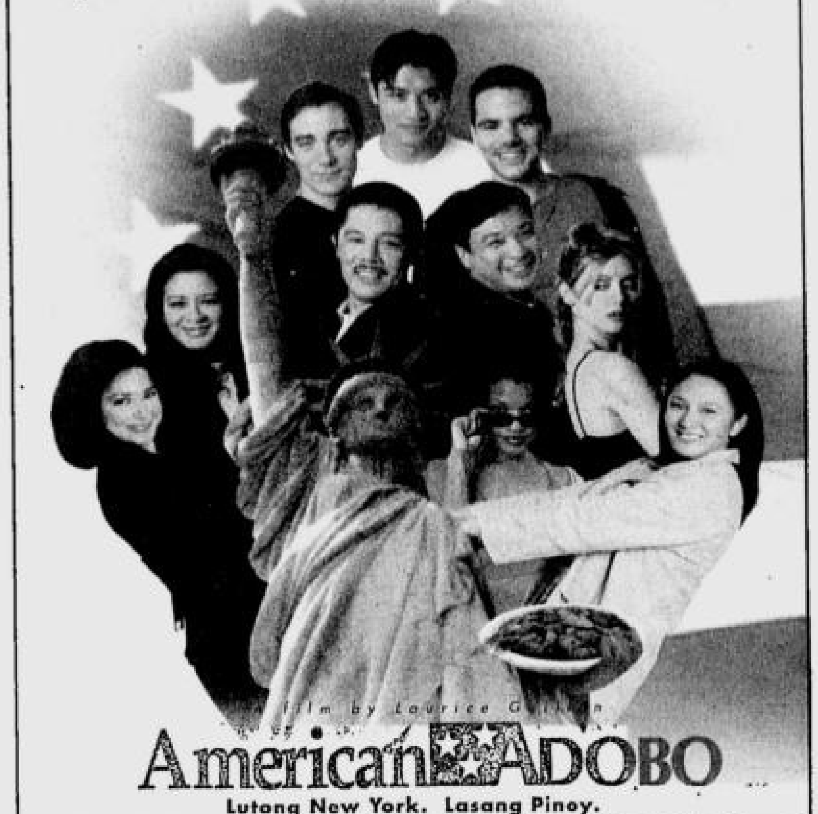
VISUAL ARTS

MANALANG AT WEST GALLERY. Pep Manalang presents her latest works "Drawing Paintings" at West Gallery (4/L SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City). The works fall in the continuum between preliminary drawing and finished painting, and utilize graphite, conte crayon, modeling paste and acrylic on paper and wood. Call 634-1284.

OPUS DEI FOUNDER IN ART. "100 Years of Blessed Josemaria Escriva" is on view at the St. Peter's Chapel of the Manila Cathedral, 7 a.m.-7 p.m., until Jan. 11. The traveling exhibit commemorates the birth centennial of Blessed Josemaria Escriva, founder of Opus Dei.

BRASS sculptor Michael Cacnio and New York-based digital artist Gerry Santos hold a two-man show depicting the man on the street earning his daily living. Dubbed "Hanap Buhay," the exhibit features new subjects in brass by Cacnio, and graphic and mixed media paintings by Santos. The exhibit runs from Jan. 12-22 at Gallery Nine (SM Megamall Artwalk, Mandaluyong City). Above is Cacnio's "Sorbetero." Call 899-2704.


"**WHITE** Texture Black" by Pep Manalang at West Gallery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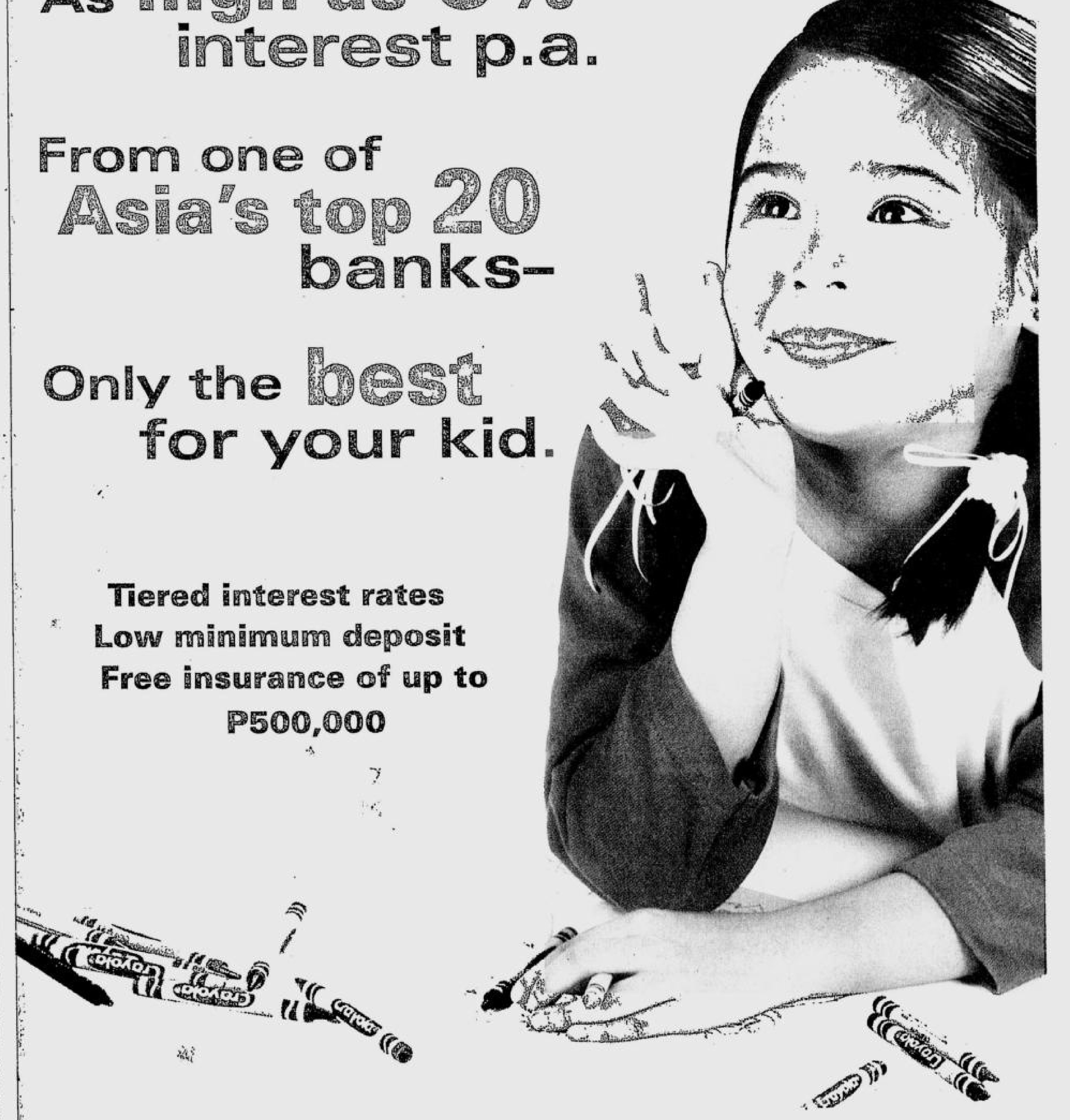
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SALONGA during a rehearsal with Joel Trinidad

A different Lea Salonga in 'Proof'

By Cora Llamas

JUST to begin with, the Tony-winning musical theater performer, generally regarded by an overwhelming number of Filipinos as the one artist who opened the doors of the Broadway and European stage industries to her fellow Asian theater artists, does NOT sing in this play. "Proof," which opened to rave reviews and garnered a Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award, is definitely not a musical.

Unlike most productions associated with Salonga, "Proof" is not mounted on a grand scale, supported by state-of-the-art stage pyrotechnics, a full orchestra and a cast of thousands. "Proof" works its labyrinthine plot, seeded with a lot of psychological mines, with a lean, mean team of four actors.

Finally, Salonga's character is darker, grittier and more complex than any of the roles she has essayed so far. Her character, the headstrong, assertive Catherine would probably dump Kim's US Marine soldier lover first rather than commit suicide. And why sing her woes when she can cut down her enemies with a rapier-like tongue and a brilliant mind that can wither any macho man?

"She is NOT sweet," Salonga herself warns. "The last thing that Catherine is is sweet. She speaks her mind. People should not expect a very sweet person to come out of me."

Director Bobby Garcia thought it prudent to tag "Proof" with a Parental Guidance advisory, if only to warn the audience about the profanity that flows freely throughout the play. "Every American cuss word ever inherited will be uttered in the show by everybody," Salonga confirms.

Garcia is particularly keeping an eye out on Lea's younger fans who look up to their star as a role model. "She has a huge following that is young. We don't want to mislead them when they come in to see the ingénue. This play will have a very adult Lea who will curse big-time. The language is very explicit."

However, Salonga is also quick to assure that the curse words "are not gratuitous. They're used in the context of the conversation. It's not that big a deal."

The play itself is hard to describe. Garcia and his cast members describe it as a psychological thriller that's full of surprises, keeping the audience guessing on the motivations and actions of the four characters up to the very last scene. The fulcrum of all this soul-searching chaos, Catherine, is the favored, younger daughter of the late mathematical genius Robert (movie/TV director-actor Michael de Mesa in a welcome return to the stage). Robert's death sets off like a carefully hidden time bomb all the insecurities, neuroses and twisted relationships that should have been buried by time and distance.

Catherine, who is as brilliant as her deceased dad, finds herself facing the unpleasant possibility of inheriting Robert's genius as well as insanity. This essentially is the pivotal plot point that keeps the story moving and the tense characters perennially hunkered down at their pressure points.

Karen, Catherine's older, estranged sister, comes home to the funeral to patch things up with her younger sibling, only for both of them to realize that the two of them not only genuinely dislike each other, they have nothing in common. What kind of bridge can they possibly built to heal the rift? Karen is played by Menchu Lauchengco-Yulo, one of the industry's most prominent musical theater leading ladies, doing her first straight dramatic play in 20 years.

Joel Trinidad, recently seen in "Rent" and Singapore Action Theater's "Shakespeare's R and J," portrays Hal, Robert's protégé who carries a huge chip on his shoulder. Opportunity and fame have passed Hal by.

While most math geniuses find their big discovery at 23, Hal is still searching for one at the ripe old age of 28. The desperate guy is already fiddling through his late mentor's notes just to find his big break.

It doesn't help Hal any that Catherine, whom he's terribly attracted to, is probably smarter than he is. Adding insult to injury is that Catherine doesn't seem to return his affections.

Resolution

Surprisingly, though, with all the angst floating around, the play doesn't end on a depressing note. "There will be moments where it's gonna be intense," says Salonga, "but you'll not leave the play with a headache. It's not super-angsty, because there is resolution at the end."

"Proof" also comes as a welcome break to Salonga if only for the respite the absence of any singing parts will give her voice. "The shift from musical theater to straight drama is not too difficult. I am quite happy that I'm not singing for a while. For once, I'm not concentrating on warming my voice or concerned that I have to reach this or that note."

It was Mary Louise Masterson's "powerful, enigmatic" performance of Catherine in the New York production of "Proof" that spurred Salonga to do the role. Garcia, who was watching with her, sensed her interest in the play and quickly asked her during the intermission, "Do you want to do it in Manila? I have the rights." The director didn't have to ask a second time. Garcia first saw "Proof" off-Broadway long before it moved to Broadway and bagged trophies. By that time, excellent word of mouth had spread. Not long after, Garcia started negotiating for the rights to produce the show in Manila. They were secured by the time he met with Salonga in New York. Staging it was only a matter of time.

"We didn't know when it would happen," says Garcia. "We talked about June of last year. By that time, Lea had committed to doing [the revival of] 'Flower Drum Song' in Broadway. I was about to start 'Hedwig and the Angry Inch' in Manila. Since 'Flower' was running until Dec. 2, I suggested to Lea, 'Why not do it when you're home for the holidays? It's easier to rehearse because it's not a musical.' "

More modest

Garcia obviously was referring to the quick pace and the more modest production design requirements that would make the non-musical, four-actor "Proof" manageable to direct in just a month. Because in another sense, he does find musicals "easier to direct. The music is the buffer that draws in the audience without much effort. Good music captures the audience, whereas a straight drama relies on the quality of the script and the performance of the actors. I'm lucky to have a fantastic cast."

The four cast members will be flexing their artistic muscles for quite a bit on opening night on Jan. 9. While "Proof" will run the standard three weeks, it will do so daily, not just on weekends. Performances will go on stage every night, except Mondays and Saturdays, and two shows on Sunday (including a matinee) for a total of 17. The traffic gridlock generated by the El Shaddai gatherings during Mondays and Saturdays was the reason for the absence of performances on Mondays and Saturdays; GSIS Theater, where "Proof" will be showing, is just a stone's throw away from the gathering spot of Brother Mike's flock.

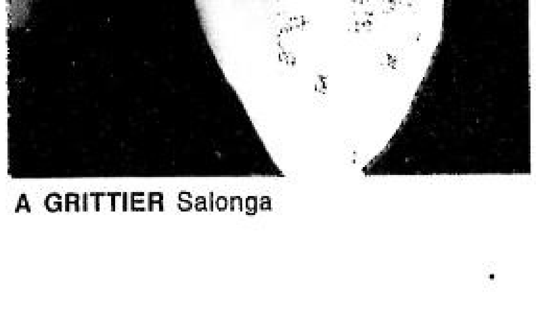
The director is confident that the weeknight showings will have their fair audience share. Thanks to Salonga's name on the marquee, all of "Proof"s" blocktimer shows have already been pre-sold. Another reason for the schedule is that "Lea won't be here for long. She'll be going back to the US. We do have to maximize her time here with us."

Garcia and Salonga obviously enjoy their professional relationship. Salonga complimented her director by saying that being in the same production with him is more fun than work. The two first met more than a decade ago, when Garcia, then starting his stage career, watched the then-19-year-old Salonga's New York debut as "Miss Saigon." They would later work together in the Manila 2000 production of that Cameron Mackintosh musical.

Their next project, the two-night "Lea Salonga: the Broadway Concert" at the PICC on Jan. 31 and Feb. 1, will have the musical theater thespian singing selected favorite songs from famous New York stage hits.

"Lea's a fast worker," Garcia gushes over his lead actress. "She quickly processes and works on what you give her. She's such a professional, and is everything I can hope for in an actress."

Atlantis' production of "Proof," written by David Auburn and directed by Bobby Garcia, will run at the GSIS Theater on Jan. 9-27. Call 892-7078.



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CHITO Roño's "Yamashita, the Tiger's Treasure" is thoroughly enjoyable.

Metro filmfest show wages of 'global cinema'

By Lito B. Zulueta

THE METRO Manila Film Festival (MMFF) has such a merry mix of entries, it has become harder to believe the yearly ritual is held to uphold excellence in Philippine cinema. To be sure, the festival is really a carnival. That explains the organizers preference for variety, not quality. How else can one explain the decision this year to adjust the traditional number of entries from six to seven in order to accommodate more silly films?

The more welcoming treatment of inane movies this year is a commercial compromise. After all, the troubled movie industry, on the brink of bankruptcy as ever, needs a shot in the arm. The merrily ringing box office also ensures more funds for Mowelfund, the industry's social security fund. A little commercialism is justified for the sake of industrial bailout and social safety net.

But commercialism has not endowed the festival with any rhyme

METRO/ p.E2

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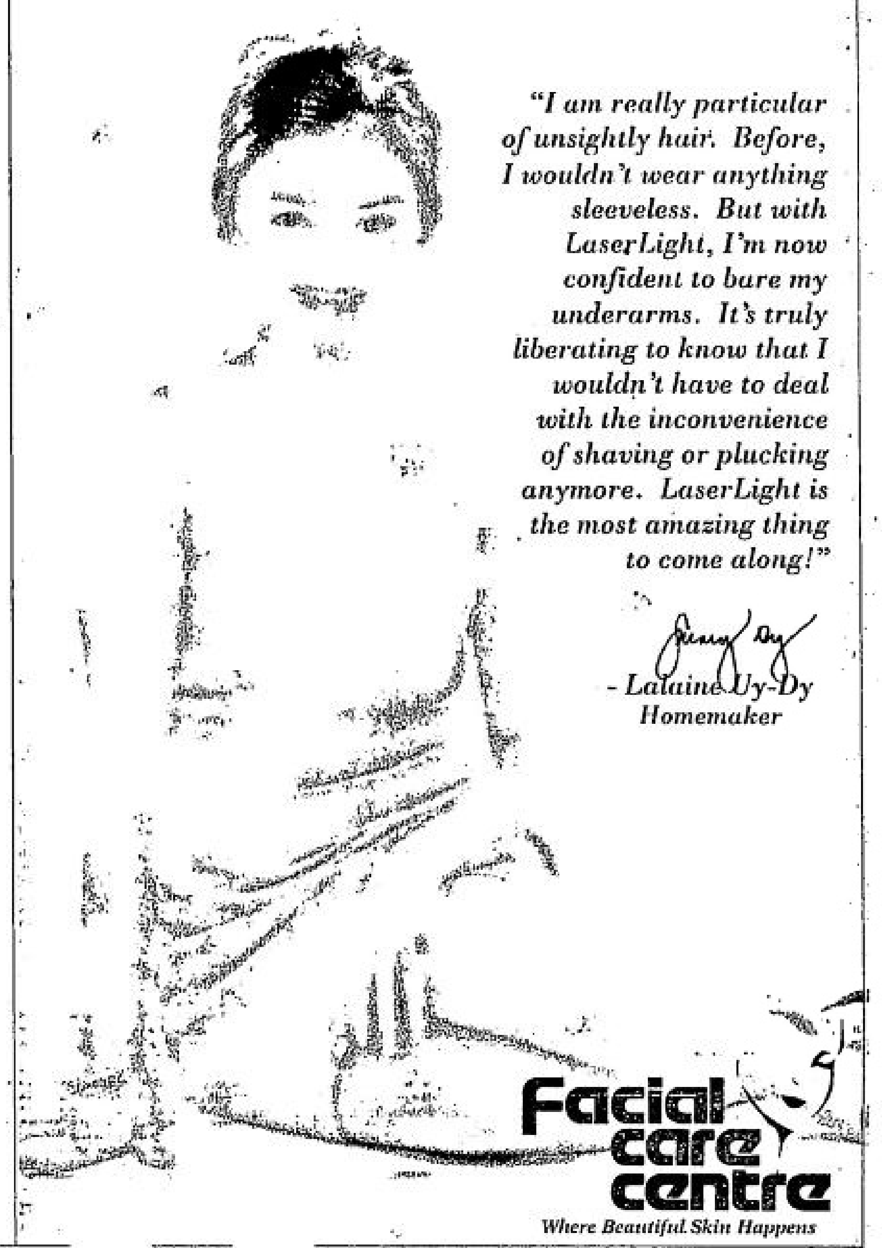

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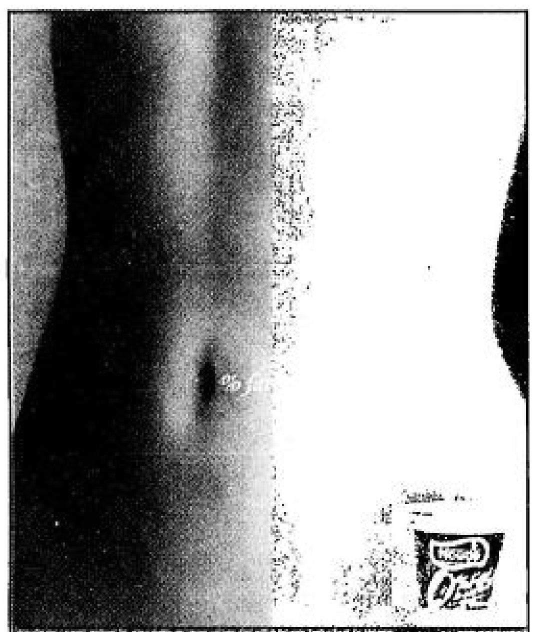

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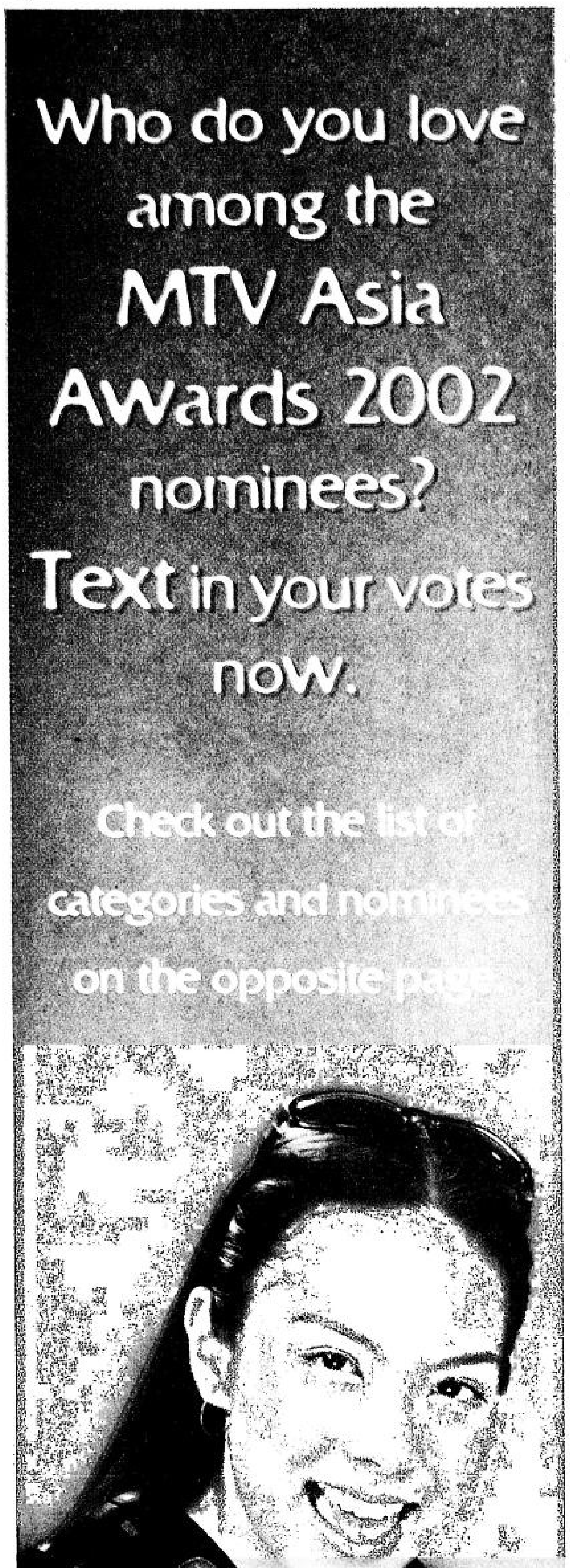
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THE PACIFIC war in "Yamashita": The movie's flashbacks are gorgeous.

Metro filmfest show wages of 'global cinema'

(From page E1)

or reason. It is at best a confused festival. Nowhere is this more shown than in the case of "Yamashita, the Tiger's Treasure," which won best picture and most of the awards. Despite its commercial gloss, its pure entertainment and its awards, "Yamashita" is not earning as much as, say, "Ang Bahay ni Lola," a ghost movie whose intelligence is at best phantasmagoric. I suspect that with its fabulous budget, "Yamashita" has not even earned proportionally better than "Susmaryosep: Four Fathers," a low-budget, low-brow, low-minded take on men of the cloth.

The most notable movie of the festival—though not necessarily the best—is "Yamashita." In conception, execution and promotion, the movie comes closest to Hollywood fare. It even has its own merchandise (Lily Monteverde, the studio boss, really outdoes herself here).

There has been much talk of late about the "global standards" of certain Filipino movies that have reportedly done—or are expected to do—well in film festivals abroad. This is a silly claim. At the least, it is an ignorant claim. To talk about "global standards" is really to talk about approximating the theme-park entertainment that is the Hollywood export. It is Chinese actors, directors and stuntmen doing their thing in Hollywood with a bigger budget for more slow motion, more kicks, more explosions and more visual effects (perhaps the Oriental good guy even gets to bed the blond bombshell). It is Luc Besson trying to beat the Americans at their own game. It is really making a small, smart movie that works and gets gobbled up by Hollywood that recasts it into more "global" fare, like "Assassin," "Desperado" and "Vanilla Sky." In short, "global standards" is Hollywood perpetuating, prostituting itself.

Smash hit

"Yamashita" has all the makings of a Hollywood smash hit. It tackles the fabled Yamashita treasure and takes the viewer on a wild ride toward its search. But the characters are cardboard thin and, in some cases, completely unbelievable. Armando Goyena returns to the screen as a World War II survivor whose past catches up with him: he and his grandson are kidnapped by a greedy former Japanese Imperial officer who returns to the Philippines to reclaim the treasure. Since the officer is apparently poor in memory and cartography (and since he apparently does not have the money to have his dentures cosmetically fixed, although we are told he's a billionaire), he does not know where he and the other officers buried the treasure. So he has the Goyena character, one of the Filipino prisoners during the war who buried the treasure, kidnapped. For the Filipino, the ordeal affords him the chance to come clean on the past: he had abandoned his brother in the cave where the Japanese ruthlessly buried the treasure and their prisoners along with it. The character may be stricken with remorse for abandoning his brother but is nonchalant about the safety of his grandson and his grandson's friends. He keeps on obeying what his captors bid him to do without bargaining for the safety of his grandson and his friends.

Even the grandson and his pals are cardboard thin. Why don't they escape despite having several chances to do so? The viewer suspects they are kept there because they're young and pretty and removing them from the frame or having them jumped on the muddy Pasig river to escape their captors would ruin their photogenic qualities. And the Albert Martinez character—why does he double-cross the kids and sell them to the Japanese businessman only to rescue them in the end? What makes him change his mind? Perhaps the answer is as priceless as the treasure.

Ah, but Chito Roño is an engaging director. He has the most exacting cinematic eye among our established directors as shown by the meticulous frame-by-frame build-up of scenes and sequences. Although the story is wobbly, the filmic weaving is nearly flawless. The flashbacks to the war are particularly effective. Roño is fully acquainted with new technology and his expertise is in full display in "Yamashita" where he uses computer digitalization to recreate and embellish war scenes and even paint the color of an Edsa-like riot on the pier where the masses ostensibly stop the Japanese from hauling the treasure out of the Philippines.

THE CAST and director of "Bagong Buwan": The movie is weighed down by the import of its subject.

BATTLE of the sexes in Tikoy Aguiluz's "Tatarin"

> The tired mantra of global cinema is an ignorant claim. To talk about 'global standards' is really to talk about approximating the theme-park entertainment that is the Hollywood export

The film really works as a thriller and a fable, and Roño, who is no mean talent, shows credible competence in mustering the resources of the genre. If viewers abolish just a fraction of their brain for two hours and surrender to the aural-visual precocity of Roño, then they will thoroughly enjoy "Yamashita."

Message virus

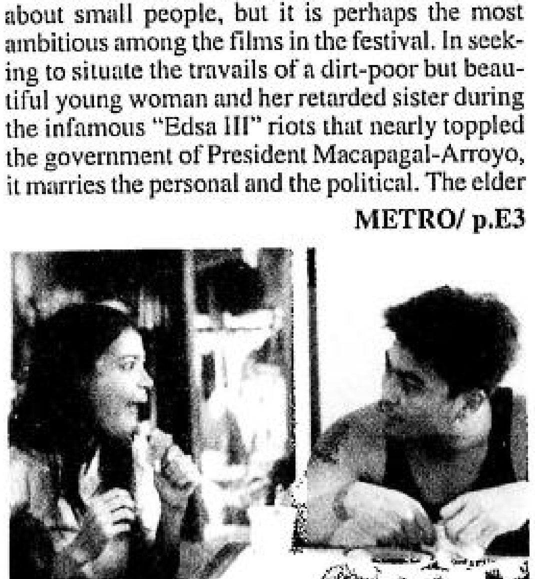
Marilou Diaz-Abaya's "Bagong Buwan" is serious and well-intentioned. For its courage in tackling a sensitive topic and presenting it in compelling cinema (the battle scenes, particularly the final konfrontasi in the jungle at night, are very exhilarative, and the acting is extremely competent), I think it should have won best picture. But the movie is weighed down by the import of its subject and the general ponderousness with which the filmmakers tackle it. "Buwan" suffers from "presentism" inflicted by the message virus.

If Abaya had just stuck to the narrative—about a Manila-trained Muslim doctor who helps his family and other Muslim civilians escape the carnage of the 1999 MILF-government war only to be caught in the crossfire of hate and bullets—she might have pulled it off. Unfortunately, as in "Jose Rizal," Abaya is predisposed by a sensibility animated by a certain intellectual arrogance to make statements about the Muslim conflict. The statements are reductionist and harm the movie's visual tact. Some of the characters exist merely to become mouthpieces for the statements. Rashid, the young Muslim warrior, and Francis, the Christian boy who gets lost and sucked into the vortex of the war, are lovable and cute, but they're merely there as contraptions of the filmmakers' intellectual self-indulgence; they're not persons.

Ambitious

Joel Lamangan's "Hubog" is a small film about small people, but it is perhaps the most ambitious among the films in the festival. In seeking to situate the travails of a dirt-poor but beautiful young woman and her retarded sister during the infamous "Edsa III" riots that nearly toppled the government of President Macapagal-Arroyo, it marries the personal and the political. The elder

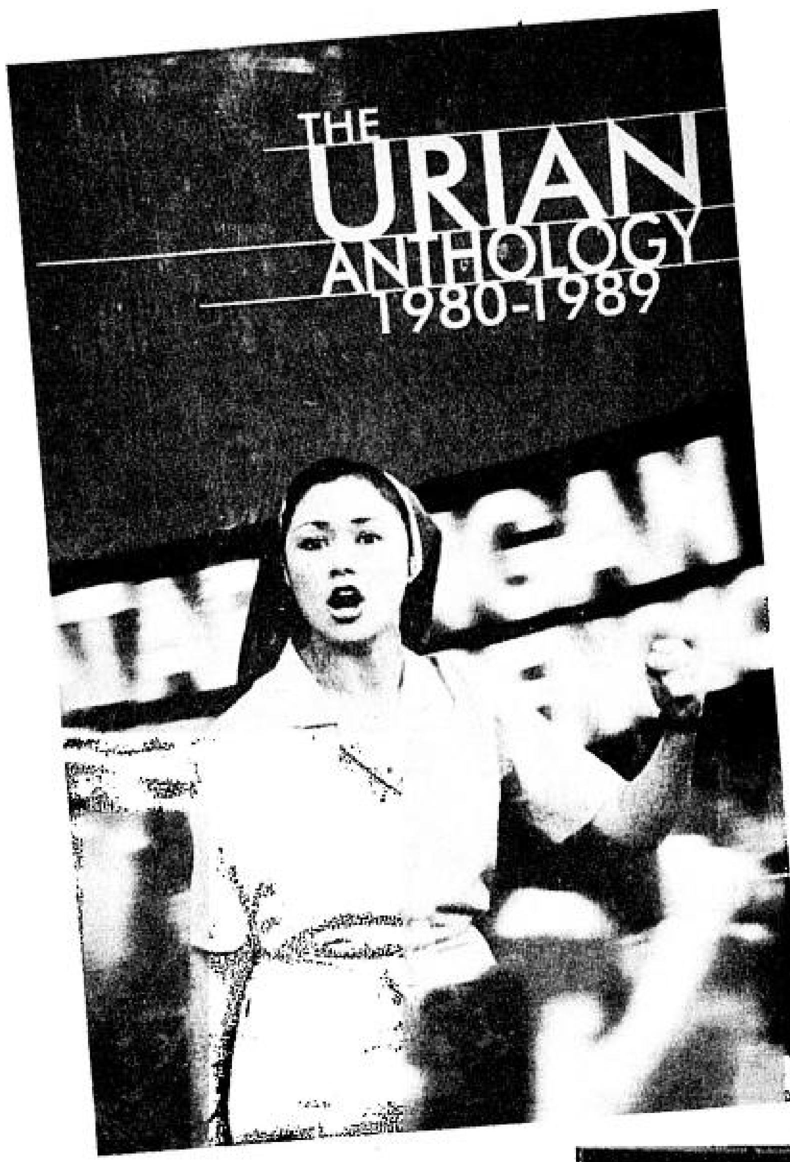
METRO/ p.E3


JOEL Lamangan employs the tabloid mode in "Hubog."

Love ’em or hate ’em, our film critics really love Pinoy movies

The Urian Anthology, 1980-1989
Edited by Nicanor G. Tiongson

BY ELLEN ONGKEKO
Contributor



The Manunuri ng Pelikulang Pilipino has just released the most thorough and accomplished book on Philippine cinema in the 1980s

REVIEW

ARE there people out there still really serious about Filipino cinema, despite the slump in the last years?

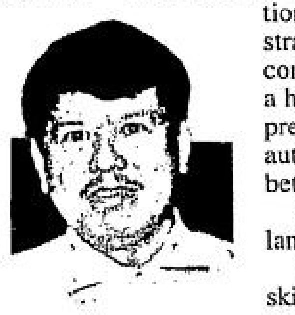
The Manunuri ng Pelikulang Pilipino (MPP) has launched "The Urian Anthology, 1980-1989," a compilation of essays on the problems, events and institutions which affected the film industry during that explosive decade. It contains film reviews delineating mainstream and new cinema, articles on major film personalities, and a complete listing of films produced during the period. The volume is over 500 pages thick, hardbound, coffee-table size, replete with photos in color and in black and white.

Who can be most serious about Filipino cinema than the MPP? There is not a single book on Filipino films at any period that is as complete and as incisive as this except perhaps its predecessor, "The Urian Anthology, 1970-1979."

Going through the volume, one is treated to memories (or nightmares, perhaps?) of Johnny Litton's euphemisms as chief executive of the government-founded Experimental Cinema of the Philippines (ECP). Under attack for promoting sexism and pornography such as "Snake Sisters" and "Hubo" at the Manila Film Center, he beautifully defended the showings as "expanding the parameters of human experience."

Censorship

On the other hand, there is Maria Kalaw Katigbak's Board of Review for Motions Pictures and Television's (BRMPT) censorship of classic films: the detail of Dodo (Ronald Bregendahl) forcibly tearing away the underwear of his wife Maritess (Anna Marin) in Marilou Diaz-Abaya's "Moral," one of the first films to depict marital rape before it was even discussed in Congress; the line "*Nakakabuti ba o hindi ang* martial law *sa bansa*?," asked by the frat master to the neophyte, in Mike de Leon's "Batch '81," which connects frat mentality to the bigger reality of fascism in the country; and the line "Imaculada Concepcion" in Ishmael Bernal's "Himala," as a way of the followers of Elsa (Nora Aunor) to explain away her pregnancy instead of confronting the issue of rape. Then there was also Bernal's "Manila by Night" retitled as "City After Dark" and banned from participating in the Berlin Film Festival. And yet the BRMPT failed to see the immorality of escapist, inane, slick films "flaunting tasteless consumption of wealth," and the nudity and violence in American films.



MANUNURI chair Mario Hernando

It's not the intention of the book to make you laugh at and feel nostalgic over these incidents. The point is, if you're wondering what's wrong with the movie industry today and you want to know where it will go from here, just look back and you will see that the problems the industry is facing today are exacerbation of problems in the past: taxation every step of the way, censorship, colonial syndrome and unlimited film importation, political instability and devaluation. All of this are tackled in the various essays and powerfully summarized by editor Nicanor G. Tiongson, who indicts the various governments for not having "the interest of the industry, much less of the Filipino cinema, in mind or at heart."

This anthology is for film lovers, scholars, practitioners and a must reading for government people with cultural portfolios.

Then again, isn't the compilation of all these essays mere rebellion or vanity on the part of the Manunuri?

Check out part 2 and you'll find that majority of the reviews featured are on films the MPP consider as new cinema, meaning films which "effectively orchestrated all the elements to communicate valuable insights into the psychology and society of the Filipinos."

Serious

Some say critics are just mean, jealous and unfulfilled artists themselves out to wreck other peoples' egos and creativity. But through most of the reviews, you'll appreciate the MPP's seriousness and love for this art form, seeing movies as cultural documents reflective of its society, giving credit even to alternative filmmakers such as Nick Deocampo, Kidlat Tahimik and Raymond Red. Obviously, the vision is to help the artist, the industry, the country, if others would just care to listen.

Yes, they are a bitchy lot—to those whom they believe prostitute the art.

For example, Isagani Cruz compares two movies of Tito, Vic and Joey. He writes, "... at least in contrast to 'Bilibid Gays,' this film ('Mr. One, Two, Three, Part 2') is not revolting. It is just plain bad." There's a positive note. "Probably due to (Mike Relon) Makiling's strong direction, Tito, Vic and Joey are restrained in this film. A major accomplishment, since grossness was a hallmark of the trio's comedy in previous films." We should ask the author if he thinks Tito Sotto is better off at the Senate.

The book is a trip down memory lane of fun, confusion and rage.

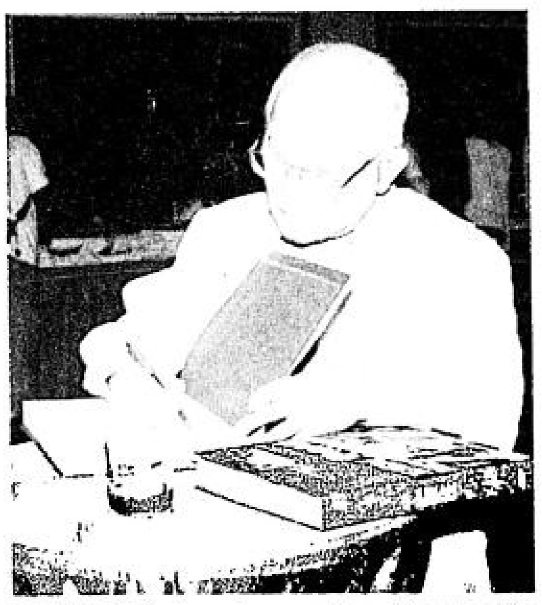
I was quite tired that day when I skimmed through the book, focusing more on the photos of the films I had seen: "Kakabakaba Ka Ba?" "Brutal," "Bona," "Relasyon," "Broken Marriage"... Then came the colored photos of some of the films considered the best by the MPP in that era. And I found myself teary-eyed... I couldn't believe it. No, these were not the best photos of those films. But the images evoked memories of both reel and real life.

"Himala" was the most expensive film at the time. I became assistant to the line producer; it was my first job out of college. I remember being intimidated at but excited by Ishmael Bernal. Many years later, I would be his assistant director. "Sister Stella L." was my second film, the year when even activist nuns and priests marched in the streets against the dictatorship. "Sister Stella L." really captured the spirit of the times; it is the cover photo of the anthology. And then "Orapronobis," where I played a part. Upon news of Lino Brocka's death, I cried and regretted that I would never have the chance to be his assistant director. I had just applied to become one of his assistants in "Noli Me Tangere."

Memories

But more than these close encounters, the photos evoked memories not just of the films, but of the whole context of our lives then. Looking at the photos was actually like watching a film of one's life and concerns then—conscientization and activism.

"Bayan Ko," "Kapit sa Patalim" "Orapronobis," "Sister Stella L" evoked in me all the struggles of the era... the rallies, the picket lines, the marches. I was at the *welga ng bayan* staged by the jeepney drivers when Lino, Behn Cervantes and two friends were arrested on the strength of the dreaded PCO (presidential commitment order), which could subject enemies of the state to indefinite detention. Those were dark times. But there were many noble spirits and a few good films.



MANUNURI founder-member Bienvenido Lumbera signs copies of anthology.

Reading the anthology, *Direk* Ishma's quotation jolted me. Asked about the state of the film industry, he said, "It is a valley of frustration..." There should be no self-pity then for all of us who have not been able to do that dream film. Even masters have to face that. But what kind of country is this that sacrifices its artists, its soul?

The book is published by TV producer Antonio Tuviera (I am, of course, wondering why it was not published by the film producers themselves) and introduced and edited by Tiongson, a brilliant nationalist and scholar. The anthology includes briefs on past and present members of the MPP and the criteria which they use in their criticism. The book is dedicated to the members who have passed away, Petronilo Bn. Daroy, Pio de Castro III and Agustin L. Sotto.

Tiongson ends his introduction with a tribute. "It is to the credit of a handful of enlightened and stout-hearted producers and committed film artists that the 1980s, for all its limitations, produced some of the very best films that the industry has ever created in its postwar history. These films will always be cherished as the golden symbols of artistic and moral integrity in an era of compromise and crass commercialism."

May I add that it is to the credit of the Manunuri ng Pelikulang Pilipino, who endeavor to seriously study that which is many times taken for granted by its own practitioners, viewers and government itself, that a film anthology of this importance has been published, so that future generations can learn from and be inspired to contribute further to the development of Filipino cinema.

Metro filmfest show wages of ‘global cinema’

(From page E2)

sister, warding off the attempts of state and private social workers to seize her sibling, falls for the seduction of her landlord who, beneath his kindly veneer, turns out to be ruthless. Is he supposed to represent the false savior, the political opposition that so fired up the passions of the pro-Erap masses against the Arroyo government but left them when the tide turned?

We really don't know. There cannot, after all, be a strictly one-to-one correspondence between ordinary sufferings and political events. The film does provide certain prefigurements and sly symbolisms which, however, are lost in the rather bulky and insistent portrayal of a world coming unhinged—the sprawling shanty town appears like jagged no man's land, the scoring is grating and mercilessly portentous, and the characters seem always shrill and hysterical, lost in their twisted passions even when they're just cleaning the house or doing menial, ordinary things. What is really happening here?

Lamangan has made a very imposing, if not a difficult, experiment, a follow-through of his remarkable 1999 MMFF entry "Bulaklak ng Maynila," a sprawling urban poverty drama. Like Lino Brocka toward the end of his career, Lamangan, I suspect, is using the journalistic mode to provide a politico-historical context to the human drama. "Hubog" really follows the temper of Brocka's "Orapronobis" and "Sa Kabila ng Lahat," attempts to approximate the jarring dimension of the newspaper headline or the prime-time TV news in the language of film. The effect is sometimes credible, sometimes sensationalistic.

Familiar territory

Some of the currency of public affairs journalism that flavors "Hubog" and "Buwan" is used to some ironic effect in the period drama "Tatarin," Tikoy Aguiluz's filmization of Nick Joaquin's short story "Summer Solstice" and play of the same title. Aguiluz really returns to familiar territory here: he achieved renown in the 1970s when his short film on the Mt. Banahaw rituals won an international prize. In fact, "Tatarin" achieves a mesmerizing effect in the mountain ritual parts that provide the viewers the special feel of religion with their strange brew of mysticism and pre-literate hysteria.

Aguiluz's documentary flair is used to remarkable effect here. If he's guilty of embellishment and sensationalism, as in the sex scenes, he can be forgiven because he portrays the battle of the sexes, resurgent matriarchy, male insecurity, the clash between the old and modernity—interweaving themes in Joaquin's fiction and drama—with the detachment of a scientist or even a journalist. Among the films of the MIFF, "Tatarin" is really the most realized, without even a mere tokenism to global cinema. It is the movie that is most faithful to its material and vision.

MTV Asia Awards 2002
Categories & Nominees

FAVORITE MUSIC ARTIST - Philippines
(Keyword: MUSICARTIST)
A - Freestyle
B - Gary Valenciano
C - Lea Salonga
D - Martin Nievera
E - Regine Velasquez

FAVORITE MALE ARTIST
(Keyword:MALEARTIST)
A - Eminem
B - Ricky Martin
C - Robbie Willams
D - Ronan Keating
E - Shaggy

FAVORITE FEMALE ARTIST
(Keyword: FEMALEARTIST)
A - Britney Spears
B - Christina Aguilera
C - Jennifer Lopez
D - Madonna
E - Mariah Carey

FAVORITE POP ACT
(Keyword: POPACT)
A - Backstreet Boys
B - Destiny's Child
C - M2M
D - N'Sync
E - Westlife

FAVORITE ROCK ACT
(Keyword: ROCKACT)
A - Bon Jovi
B - Coldplay
C - Limp Bizkit
D - Linkin Park
E - U2

FAVORITE VIDEO
(Keyword: VIDEO)
A - The Call (Backstreet Boys)
B - Weapon of Choice (Fatboy Slim)
C - 19-2000 (Gorillaz)
D - POP (N'Sync)
E - Lady Marmalade (Pink, Christina Aguilera, Mya, Lil' Kim)

FAVORITE BREAKTHROUGH ARTIST (Keyword: BREAKTHROUGH)
A - Coldplay
B - Gorillaz
C - Nelly Furtado
D - Alicia Keys
E - Linkin Park

FAVORITE FILM
(Keyword: FILM)
A - Charlie's Angels
B - Crouching Tiger,Hidden Dragon
C - Rush Hour 2
D - Pearl Harbor
E - Shrek
F - The Mummy Returns

FAVORITE FASHION DESIGNER
(Keyword: FASHION)
A - Donatella Versace (Versace)
B - John Galliano (Christian Dior)
C - Marc Jacobs (Louis Vuitton/ Marc Jacobs)
D - Miuccia Prada (Prada/Miu Miu)
E - Stella McCartney
F - Tom Ford (Gucci/ YSL)

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A 'Ring' for all ages

It's dazzling, mesmerising, spectacular. 'The Lord of the Rings' is the best fantasy film in years

ELIJAH Wood is extraordinary as Frodo.

REVIEW

By Gibbs Cadiz
Contributor

PETER Jackson's splendid version of "The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring" is simply the best fantasy film in years. Salon.com isn't way off the mark in crowning "Rings" "the best movie of the year." Forget the dazzling, hallucinatory richness of "Moulin Rouge." This one is more opulent. Forget "Harry Potter," for that matter. Tolkien's panoramic tale of dwarves, elves, wizards and humans locked in epic combat in a mythic, faraway world translates onscreen with remarkably authentic magic, making "Harry Potter" seem like a shabby also-ran.

A large part of that visceral sense of magic rests on Jackson's astute use of special effects. "Rings" is chock-full of eye-popping wonders that, in the hands of directors more interested in their own cleverness, would have ended up defining—and deforming—the movie. George Lucas' "The Phantom Menace" comes to mind. Where in that lugubrious movie did you ever feel the *texture* of any of its imagined worlds? The spires of Coruscant are a dazzling sight, all right, but they remain strangely devoid of resonance, a pretty but flat set piece that's more a technological show-off than a seminal aid to the story.

Contrast that, for instance, with the marvelous way Jackson uses the unfamiliar vistas of New Zealand—tweaked here and there to add a layer of otherworldly menace or grandeur—to evoke a tactile, fully imagined world. You can almost smell the leafy, undulating countryside of Shire, its redolent earth and sparkling fields—and then understand why Tolkien would write an epic fantasy tetralogy ("The Fellowship of The Ring" trilogy plus its prequel, "The Hobbit") in celebration of that lovely but vanished piece of rural England.

Blink your eyes, and you miss that split-second scene where the otherwise kindly Bilbo Baggins (Ian Holms) lunges for the ring held by his cousin Frodo (Elijah Wood, terrific). In that ultra-fleet moment, Jackson manages to work in an amazing piece of special effect: Holm's face contorts into a terrifying evocation of evil—the very picture of the ring's corruptive powers—and then just as suddenly relaxes into normalcy. You know it's a special effect; Holm's face seems to explode into that multipointed expression of surprise so often used in cartoon characters, like a thought balloon blown up into a shout. Yet the sight registers so seamlessly that you gasp in recognition only after the shock is over. It's a moment of startling terror and beauty.

Making sense

Jackson's accomplishments in this film are not only confined to conjuring up one gorgeous cinematic composition after another. He actually succeeds in making sense of a story that, in many people's minds, is simply, utterly unfilmable. Tolkien's much-revered "Ring" stories are drenched in enormous detail; their magic swirl of knights and hobbits, sword and sorcery, myth and romance make for enchanting—but ponderous—reading. Nevertheless, generations of fans have embraced the Tolkien texts for the philosophical and allegorical underpinnings that animate these stories, and that still seem to resonate in the current chaos of the modern world.

Tolkien, like all great storytellers, simply retold the age-old battle between good and evil, but with years of philological scholarship (the study of words and word origins) backing his literary effort. To roughly sketch it: an all-powerful ring was forged by the dark lord Sauron to unify the powers of a set of lesser rings that had been dispersed to various kingdoms in Middle-Earth. Anybody who possesses this "ring of rings" will have the power to rule the world. But Sauron loses the ring until, thousands of years later, it ends up in the hands of the hobbit Bilbo Baggins. He then bequeaths it to his young cousin, Frodo. Encouraged by the wizard Gandalf (Ian McKellen), Frodo decides to destroy the ring forever by bringing it to the only place that can obliterate it—the volcanic fires of Mount Doom in Mordor, where it had its beginnings. Joining him in this heroic journey are three more hobbits, two knights, a feather-footed elf, a cantankerous dwarf and the great Gandalf—eight representative inhabitants of Middle-Earth. They form the Fellowship of the Ring.

What lifts this story from sheer childhood fantasy to stirring myth is essentially its unshakeable sense of self-importance. Tolkien invested the "Ring" with prodigious imagination wrapped in *gravitas*. Consider the names that electrify his stories: Sauron, Sarumar, Aragorn, Boromir, Mordor. The words trip around the mouth in sonorous tones, inviting images of larger-than-life fancy and a thrilling journey into the heart of fantasy.

Masterful

.To understand Jackson's great achievement in approximating on film the heroic spirit of Tolkien's texts, check out the masterful way he lays out the "Rings' " back story in the beginning of the movie. In 20 minutes or so of fast, gripping exposition, "The Hobbit" prequel (from the forging of the rings right up to Bilbo Baggins' taking possession of the Evil Ring) is ingeniously taken care of, with Cate Blanchett's voice providing a shivery quality to the narration. Jackson also cowrote the film's screenplay with two other writers; if the film is a marvel of coherence, it's chiefly his doing.

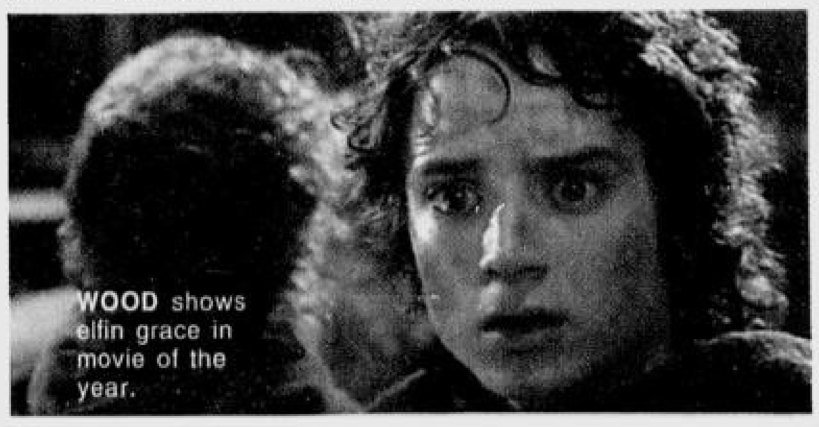
A word about Cate Blanchett: she is magnificent. If there's one thing you could possibly dislike about "The Lord of the Rings," it is that it fails to make good use of two extraordinary actresses in Liv Tyler and Cate Blanchett. They flit on the edges of the story, never really becoming part of the adventure. But their individual incandescence makes them perfect for playing elf maidens straight out of fairy tales. Blanchett, especially, is mesmerising as the elf queen Galadriel. Here is a true actress: her presence onscreen is so palpable you find yourself involuntarily shrinking back as if in the presence of royalty.

The rest of the cast act like a dream. Ian Mckellen brings a weary majesty to Gandalf. The great Christopher Lee resurrects himself, Dracula-like, from B-movie perdition with a chilling turn as the apostate wizard Saruman. And Viggo Mortensen as the mysterious knight Aragorn strikes sparks every time his brooding, hooded eyes fill up the screen.

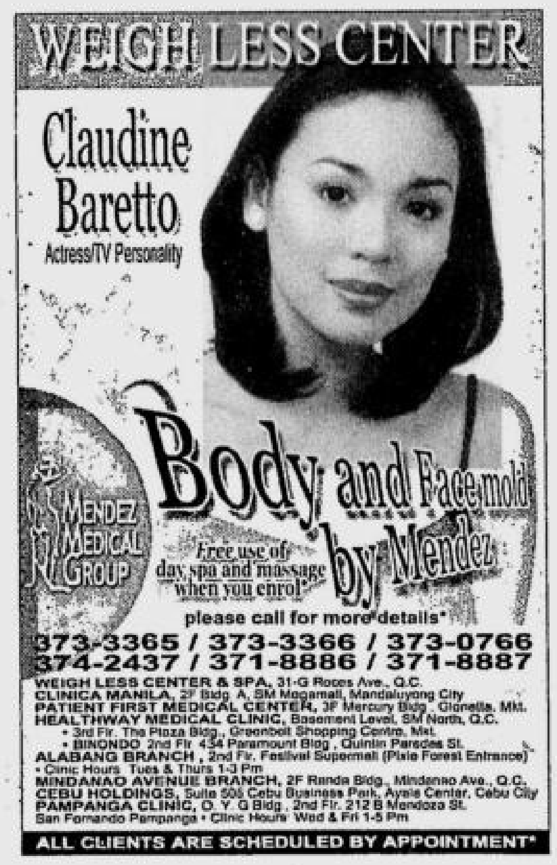
The movie, though, belongs largely to Elijah Wood, who is extraordinary as Frodo. Wood is a perfect hobbit—thick-set, stocky, not movie star-handsome, but with an elfin grace. Even as a precocious child in Barry Levinson's "Avalon," he seemed already possessed of a remarkably honest acting style. Here, his enormous pools of eyes anchor the movie's sense of believability, its shifting shadows always grounding the fantastical in something real and extrinsic.

Who'd ever thought the relatively unknown Peter Jackson had it in him to pull off something like "The Lord of the Rings"? But whoever and wherever he is, bless him. He's come up with a career-defining film not just for himself, his actors and his crew (if cinematographer Andrew Lesnie and production designer Grant Major don't win Oscars for their truly outstanding work in this film, consider them robbed), but for Tolkien himself and his beloved Middle-Earth. So long mired in its own myth and mania, this thrilling fantasy masterpiece is now ours once again to enjoy, but in glorious new cinematic form. Yup, "The Lord of the Rings" is the movie of the year.

E-mail the author at cadiz.gh@100.ph



WOOD shows elfin grace in movie of the year.



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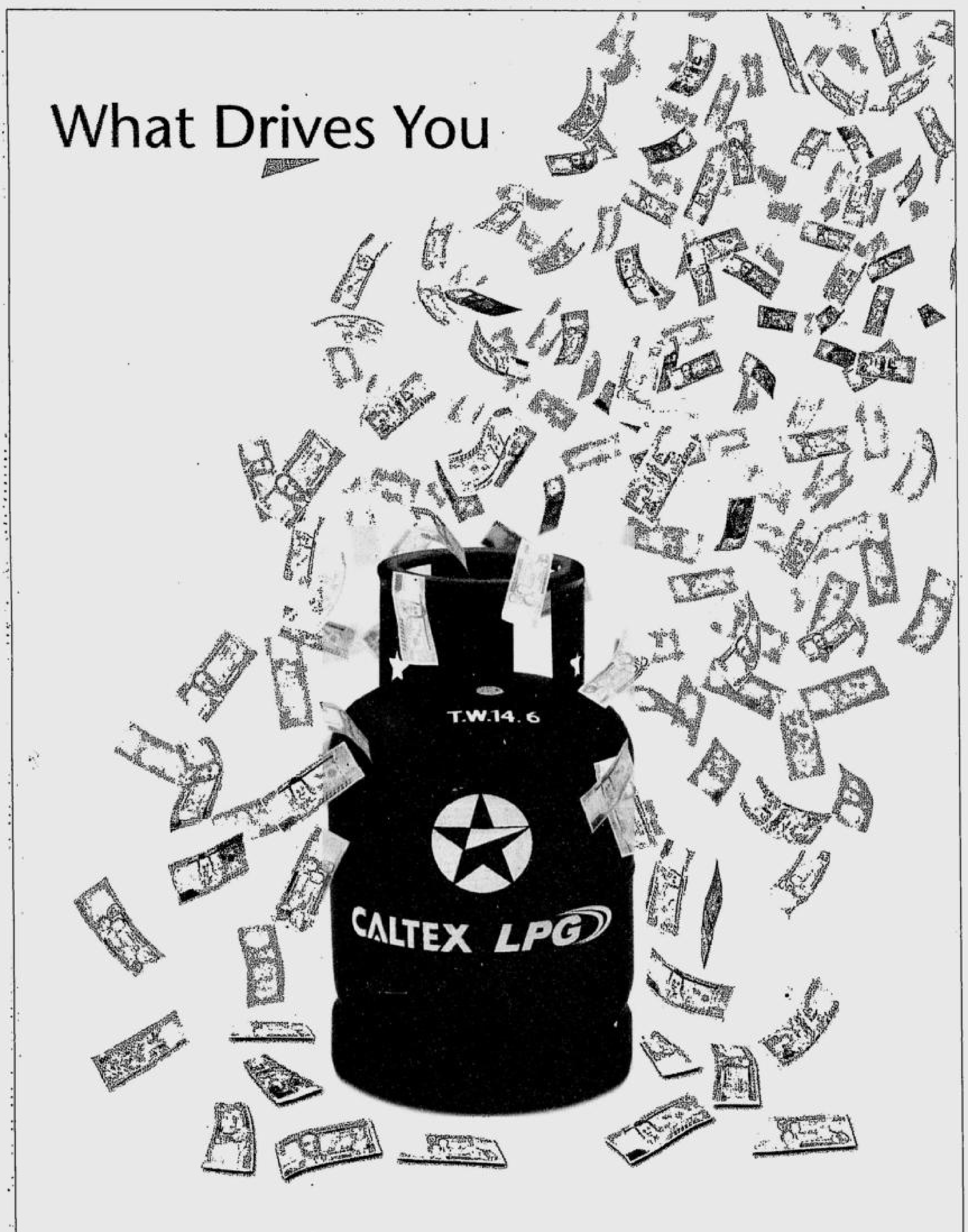

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